

Applique

THE
COMMON PEOPLE
Taught to defend their
COMMUNION
WITH THE
Church of England,

*Against the Attempts and Insinua-
tions of Popish Emissarys*

In a Dialogue between a *Popish Priest*,
And
a Plain Countryman.



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mund Hall*, Rector of *Whitwell* in *Derbyshire*,
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RUTLAND.

O X F O R D,

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JO. MATHER

Vice-Can. *OXON.*

Maii 11. 1727.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND
FATHER IN GOD
EDWARD
LORD BISHOP
OF
Coventry and Lichfield.

My Lord,

YOUR Lordship is already acquainted with
the Occasion of these Papers, and as the
Attempts alluded to in them were made in
my Absence, I must think my self very happy, that
I had left a Person upon the Place so able to defeat
them: However I could not but look upon my self as
obliged

p[®]

obliged in Duty to take my part in this Engagement, and if the Countryman seems to appear too learned in this Controversy, I hope it may be thought no unreasonable Supposition, that after a due Course of Catechising and Expounding during almost half the Year for ten Years together, a sensible Man of good Attention and Memory might lay up a great deal of what he had heard, when these Points and all others between the Church of Rome and Us had been so fully stated over and over, and I have taken care, that the same Course is still continued.

We, that live in the Neighbourhood of several Popish Emissarys, do know, how Vigilant and Active they are; and the Church of Rome never gain'd a greater Advantage over us, since the Desolation made by the Sectarys of the last Age, than when many even of our selves seem'd to think, that there was no Danger from that Quarter, and were ready to ridicule and expose those among us, who made the Danger of Popery the Subject of their Discourses. This was a fatal Security, and while the Husbandmen thus slept, our Enemy's had an Opportunity of Sowing their Tares, and reaping a plentiful Harvest.

But, I hope, we are thoroughly awaken'd, and shall keep a watchful Eye upon all their Motions; Your Lordship's Paternal Care extends to every Concern, and reaches to the remotest Corners of your Diocese, and your readiness to assist your Clergy upon their Application with your Fatherly Advice, and wise Directions in the most affectionate and obliging Manner must encourage us all in the faithful Discharge
of

of our Duty, and engage us to make those Returns,
of all Duty and Affection to your Lordship, which you
so highly deserve.

I would not be thought to have any Intention of
giving the least Umbrage with relation to the most
Noble Person intimated in the Beginning of this Dia-
logue: I have all the Honour and Regard for Him,
which his high Rank, and higher Qualities do claim:
I could not help laying the Scene, where I did, and
I never thought him answerable for the Zeal and
Conduct of those, whom he entertains for better Pur-
poses in his Family.

I should ask your Lordship's Pardon for the Fa-
miliar Talk of the Countryman, when he is not re-
peating his Argument, but speaking as of Himself:
and I may plead, that those plain homely Expressions
are necessary to preserve the Way and Manners of
such a Character.

I shall beg leave to close this Address to your
Lordship with two great Truths: That the Church
of England can only be defended upon true Catholic
Principles: and that she can only be preserved by
a Protestant Prince on the Throne of these Kingdoms:
This Blessing may we ever enjoy in an uninterrupted
Succession of Princes of our own Communion in this
Royal Family, who shall be a perpetual Defence and
Ornament to this Church and Nation!

If what I have done shall in any Degree meet with
your Lordship's Approbation, and prove any ways
useful

useful to the good Purpose, I designed, it will be a particular Satisfaction, and the more, as it hath afforded me this further Opportunity of shewing my self, may it please your Lordship,

Your Lordship's

most Dutiful Son

and most Obedient Servant

Edmund Hall.
Ascension day
1727.

HENRY FELTON.

[1]

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In a Dialogue between a *Popish Priest*,

And

a *Plain Countryman*.

Priest. **G**OOD morrow, *Countryman*, I
have seen your Face several
times of late, pray where do
you live?

Countryman. I live in the neighbouring Parish
here hard by, and I come hither to work.

Pr. Do you work here constantly all the year
round?

C. M. No, Sir, I am on and off, just as it hap-
pens: sometimes we have a good long Job of it,
sometimes we are put off for a good while, just
as my *Lord* pleases.

A

Pr.

2 *No Salvation out of the Church.*

Pr. My *Lord* is a very good *Lord*; I suppose, you are not held to your strict Wages: you have Meat and Drink besides, especially, when my *Lord* is in the Country.

C. M. You seem a Stranger, Sir, but I will tell you. That's all thereafter as a Man gives into them: not but that all the Workmen are made to drink sometimes: my *Lord* is a very good *Gentleman*, and would have the Poor reliev'd indifferently for all that I can learn; but he do's not do that Business himself, you know: and the Labourers, and poor people are very well done to in the main, but if one would but give into them, and hearken to their way, be he Man or Woman, he would be used kindly enough.

Pr. Why then this good *Lord* is the more to be commended, if he makes use of his Charity to the saving of their Souls.

C. M. Look you, Sir, 'tis the Servants do that, my *Lord* 'tis like leaves it to them; and what you say would be true enough, if this was the way to save their Souls: but I think my Soul safe enough, provided I do my Duty, in the way that I am in: but, Sir, I must go to my Work, it is just upon six a Clock.

Pr. Honest Friend, you seem to be a good downright plain sensible Man, and I should be glad to have more Discourse with you: as for your Work, I will excuse you to the *Steward*, and you shall have your Wages nevertheless. Pray, let me ask you, why do you think your self safe enough in the way you are in? Have you ever considered, that there is no *Salvation out of the Church*?

C. M.

Church of Engl. a true Church. 3

C. M. Yes, Sir, I have been so taught, and I do accordingly believe the Doctrine to be, generally speaking, true. It is not such plain Men's Business, as I am, to search nicely into Cases and Exceptions.

Pr. Well: you say very well, you discover a good teachable Disposition, and, I suppose, are willing to learn of those, that are wiser, and more learned, than your self. If then you believe, there is *no Salvation out of the Church*, do not you think your self in a very dangerous Condition?

C. M. No, Sir, for I think my self within the *Church*.

Pr. Ay: but by the *Church* is meant the *Catholic Church*. I suppose, you are of that, they call the *Church of England*; but you are much mistaken, if you think *that* to be the *Catholic Church*.

C. M. No, Sir, I do not think the *Church of England* to be the *Catholic Church*: I have been better instructed: I have been taught that the *Church of England* is a *pure and sound Part* of the *Catholic Church*, and that is enough for me.

Pr. You do not consider, that there is but *one Catholic Church*, and the *Church of England* being separated from that *one Church*, those, that are of the *Church of England*, cannot be of the *Catholic Church*.

C. M. So far you say true indeed, there is but *one Catholic Church*: it is an *Article* of our *Creed*; but that the *Church of England* is no *Part* of this *Catholic Church* is strange News to me, and I shall be much concern'd, if it be true.

4 *Ch. of Rome not the Catholic*

Pr. Why it is plain: the *Church of England* is no *part* of the *Church of Rome*, and therefore no *part* of the *Catholic Church*.

C. M. Sir, I am no Scholar, but in my simple sense I do not see that: it do's not seem to me to follow.

Pr. Yes it follows very clearly. The *Church of Rome* is the *Catholic Church*, and therefore *whoever* is *not*, or whatever *Church* is *not* of the *Church of Rome*, *that Person*, or *that Church* cannot be of the *Catholic Church*.

C. M. Why this is rare fine talking now, if it were but true; but I have been told, that the *Church of Rome* is not the *Catholic Church*; and but a *part* of it at most, and not *one* of the *best parts* neither.

Pr. Those that tell you so, are *Schismatics* and *Heretics*, and only say so to keep themselves in Countenance. The *Church of Rome* is the *Mother* and *Mistress* of all *Churches*: she was founded by *St Peter* the *Head* and *Prince* of the *Apostles*: he is the *Vicar* of *Christ*: to him our Lord said, ^a *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church.* — And I will give unto thee the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*. ^b *Him* he commanded to *strengthen his Brethren*, and over and over again to ^c *feed his Lambs and his Sheep*. And after all this, wilt thou presume to say, that the *Church of Rome* is not the *Catholic Church*?

C. M. You say, Sir, that the *Church of Rome* was founded by *St Peter*; I say that the *Catholic Church* was founded by *Christ*. Every *Church* founded by any *particular Apostle* is therefore

^a Matth. XVI. 18, 19. ^b Luke XXII. 32. ^c John XXI. 15, 16, 17.

but a particular Church. 5

not the *Catholic*, but a *particular Church*: I have been taught, that the *Catholic Church* is in *time before every particular Church*, that the *original Church* or Company of Believers at *Jerusalem* or *elsewhere* was the *Catholic Church*, but there was this *Catholic Church*, before there was any *Church* at *Rome*, and therefore *Rome* cannot be the *Catholic Church*. This Argument, I am told, may be enlarged upon both in Fact and Reason to the utmost Confusion of your Pretensions.

Pr. This Argument seems something new, and I have not consider'd it, but from the *Texts* I have given you, it seems that the *Catholic Church* went along with *St Peter*, and those only, who adhere to his *Successor*, are of the *Catholic Church*.

C. M. Then it should seem that *St Peter* was *first Bishop of Jerusalem*, for *there*, and in the *Country of Judea and Galilee* was the *first Catholic Church*: and out of this *original Church*, when other *Churches* grew, then *Jerusalem* became a *particular Church*, and of *that* and all other *Churches* from thenceforth consisted the *Catholic Church*, so that upon this Principle supposing *Rome* had been the *original Church*, yet still upon the founding of other *Churches*, *she* would be no more than a *particular Church*, and *she* together with *them* would make up the *Catholic Church*.

Pr. You have been finely instructed; what signifies all this arguing against plain Evidence of *Scripture*. Answer the *Texts* I gave you, they will confound you and all Heretics for ever. There are *St Matthew* the *XVI*, and *St Luke* *XXII*, and *St John* the *XXI*. and *forty places* be-
side

6 *Scripture vainly quoted*

side to silence such vain Disputers, who when they cannot answer what is urged from *Scripture*, think to evade all by bold and blasphemous Suppositions.

C. M. My Supposition, Sir, is neither bold nor blasphemous: you seem to be in a great heat: you talk at a vast rate, and have quoted *Scripture* like *mad*. I only said, as I have been taught: I did not mean to offend you, and without offence be it spoken, I am not convinc'd by all this vehement Passion, that the *Church of Rome* is the *Catholic Church*, and as I desire to be inform'd, I am content to talk with you upon this Argument in the common Form, as I have been instructed to do.

Pr. Well, that is a good temper, I like those that are willing to be inform'd, and I have inform'd thee, I think. What? dost thou not believe the *Scriptures*?

C. M. Yes, Sir, but what is that to the purpose? you *play* the *Scriptures* upon *us*, but will not *abide* by *them* *yourselves*; but I do believe *them*, and I do read, and endeavour to understand *them*, and therefore I can't take things at first hand without considering, especially when they are powder'd so thick upon one: I have been taught to examine things one by one, point by point, by degrees: I have heard a great deal of Talk and Discourse in my time, and by all that I have heard, I cannot think, that the *Church of Rome* is the *Catholic Church*.

Pr. Pray, whom have you heard talk? who has been your Instructor? He is a wise Man, I warrant him, to submit the *Scriptures* to such
Under-

by Papists against Protestants. 7

Understandings, as yours. 'Tis like he knows much of the Matter himself.

C. M. Sir, begging your Pardon, I am not ashamed of my Teacher; but this I will say for him: he endeavours to explain the *Scriptures* to our Understandings; and, I think, he *explains* them very right, because I *understand* him very clearly.

Pr. What is your Understanding or his, but a *private Spirit*? This 'tis when People leave the *Catholic Church*: is was not so, when all our *Ancestors* were of the *Church of Rome*, which, I tell you again is the *Catholic Church*, and there is none besides her.

C. M. Sir, if you will give me leave to talk in my foolish way, I would know, whether you intend I should make use of that Reason, *God* hath given me, or not? if not, we talk to no purpose. What signifies it to you, whether I *believe* the *Scriptures* or not? Your *Question*, I find was *idle* and *ensnaring*. Will you bring *Scripture* for a Proof of any thing to me, and not suffer me to judge whether it *proves* or *no*? or must I *blindly submit* to what you say *without examining*?

Pr. Yes, 'tis your *Duty* to *submit*. You must *bear the^a Church*, and when I speak the *Sense* of the *Church*, as I declare *I do*, you must believe me.

C. M. Well, but as yet we are but where we were: You are pleased to tell me, Sir, that I must *bear the Church*, and that taken in a right sense I do acknowledge: Now I have been taught that this Command of our *Lord* related to such personal Differences, as should arise be-

^a Matth. XVIII. 17.

8 *The use of our Reason denied.*

Man and Man, and that our *blessed Lord* directs his *Disciples* to bring their Differences to the *Hearing* and *Decision* of the *Church*, because the *Civil Magistrates* were at that time, and for some Ages would continue to be *Enemys* to his *Religion*. The same Command, and upon the same Reason St *Paul* enforces afterwards in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*: and this Precept holds, where the *Civil Magistrate* is *Christ's Enemy*. This being the Occasion and Subject of this Command, it must be still interpreted and practised in a manner agreeable and answerable to its first Design.

Pr. This is the Fruits of *Laymen's* reading the *Scripture*; this is the Perverseness, that *pernicious Indulgence* teaches them! there can be no Determination of any thing without a perfect *Submission* to the *Church*.

C. M. Now here again, as it seems to me, is a most wonderful strange thing. You would *convince* me, and will not let me *use* my *Reason*: you offer *Scripture*, and will not let me *pretend* to *understand* it. To me it seems truly, that if I am allowed to use my Understanding at all, 'tis only till I can bring it to a *perfect Submission*, as you call it, and then in point of *Religion* I must *use* it *no more* for ever.

Pr. Thou art a very perverse Fellow; canst thou not believe what I say, when I bring such clear *Scripture* to prove the Point we are upon, that the *Church* of *Rome* is the *Catholic Church*? when once thou believest *this*, and art told what are the *great Privileges* of the *Catholic Church*,

a 1 Cor. VI. 1, &c.

thou

Catholic Church defin'd. 9

thou wilt easily believe every thing else she tells thee.

C. M. That is true now, as I am here, and as plain as a Pike-staff; only then I guess, the Church of Rome pretends to some higher Privileges than the Catholic Church pretends to. Nay, Sir, don't fall into a Passion, I mean, your Catholic Church pretends to higher Privileges than our Catholic Church pretends to.

Pr. What are there two Catholic Churches then? at the beginning of our Discourse you own'd there was but One.

C. M. And so I say still, and I say, that our Church of England is a sound Part of that one Catholic Church; but you say, that it is no Part of the Church of Rome, and so say I too: if then the Church of Rome be your Catholic Church, I say again, that there are two, and one of them is of your own making.

Pr. Why what dost thou take the Catholic Church to be? Thou pretendest to be very knowing; what is thy Notion of the Catholic Church?

C. M. My Notion of the Catholic Church is this, that it is the whole Company of Christian People throughout all Nations of the World, where the true Faith of Christ is professed, and his Sacraments are duly administer'd: I do not speak so exactly as I have been taught, but it is to this Sense and Meaning.

Pr. Well your Notion is true enough in a great Measure, but you should have enlarg'd it a little, and said, *The Catholic Church is the Company of all the Faithful over all the World in Sub-*

10 *Definitions of it compar'd.*

jection to the *Universal Bishop, Christ's Vicar the Pope of Rome*; and then you would clearly see, that the *Church of Rome* is the *Catholic Church*.

C. M. I protest, this is one of the cleverest fetches I ever met with in my Life: Why, Sir, you have done the *Trick: 'tis done in a Dish*, as they say, *as round as a Hoop*. Only I have an Objection or two, which I want to get over. One is, that if we confine the *Catholic Church* to the Faithful, who are in Subjection to the *Pope*, it will not be half so large as I took it to be, and so what you call *enlarging* my Notion would be indeed *confining* it.

Pr. I can't help that, you see the Thing is clear, and the only way is for those, that are *out* to come *in* as fast as they can.

C. M. Not so fast neither, Sir, for you are begging the Question, as they call it, that is, taking for granted the very thing in Dispute: you *define* the *Catholic Church* one way, I another. You in a *narrower*, I in a *larger* Compass; the *largest* Compass, methinks, should suit *best* with the *Catholic Church*. In short, you only assert, and that without proving, what we do positively deny, That the *Church of Rome* is the *Catholic Church*.

Pr. What? don't I prove? don't I bring Proof in abundance? if thou wilt shut thy Eyes, that thou mayest not see, the Sun it self will shine to thee in vain. What? doth not the *Definition*, I gave, rise from the very *Scriptures*, I have produc'd?

C. M. No surely; and I doubt not but I can shew, that it do's not: in the mean time, there

Church of Rome Uncharitable. II

is still another Difficulty with me, which truly rises out of your *Definition*, and that is this. I have heard several of our learned Folk say, that to say the *Church of Rome* is the *Catholic Church*, is all one as to say, that *one particular Church* is *all the Churches in the World*.

Pr. And so she is by *Right*, for all *Churches* ought to submit to her; and so she is in *Fact*, for those *Churches*, that do not submit to her, are *no Churches* at all.

C. M. This I have heard indeed, and I remember, He, whom you called my *Instructor*, replied, that then their *Charity* was no more *Catholic* than their *Church*.

Pr. 'Tis no Breach of Charity, I must tell you, to damn them that are out of the Pale of the *Church*, and those that are not in the *Church of Rome*, are not in the Pale of the *Church*.

C. M. And so, Sir, in your great Charity you say they are damn'd; but, I hope, the Pale of the *Church* is much wider than the narrow Compass of the *Roman Church*. You are still begging the Question, and supposing *Rome* to be the *Catholic Church*, but once again I answer, that there was a *Christian Church*, before there was a *Christian* or any *Church* in *Rome*, and therefore those may be *within* the Pale of the *Church*, who are not *within* the *Roman Inclosure*.

Pr. I reply, that St *Peter* fixing his See at *Rome* made *Rome* the *Catholic Church*.

C. M. I shall leave your reply to the Judgment of all reasonable Men; I deny that the *Catholic Church* is fixed to any one place: it began at *Jerusalem*, and was propagated as far as

the *Gospel* it self: but as to place, it has chang'd its Situation, and may go from one Kingdom to another People, not by *St Peter's Translation* of it, but by God's *Providence*, who may remove his *Candlesticks* from one place, and transplant the *Light* of the *Gospel* to another. This he hath done, and *Christ* will have a *Church* upon Earth, tho' *Rome* should be no more.

Pr. Now thou art caught and confuted by thy own Words: it is not possible the *Church* should fail. Dost not thou know, that we make *Duration* one of the *Notes* of the *Church*?

C. M. Yes, and 'tis most absurd in you to do so, especially as you make it a *Mark* of the *Church* of *Rome*: *Duration* can be no *Mark*, till it is *past*; but we do believe, because *Christ* has said it, that his *Church* shall endure for ever: this Promise you arrogate to the *Roman*, by that old manifest *Fallacy* of begging the Question, and taking it for granted, that *she* is the *Catholic Church*.

Pr. The Promises made to *St Peter* are made to the *Church* of *Rome*, but the Promise of the *Church's Duration* is made to *St Peter*, and therefore to the *Church* of *Rome*.

C. M. The Promise to *St Peter* is made to the *Catholic Church*, and to *Rome* no otherwise than as *she* is a *Member* of the *Catholic Church*; this is still repeating the *Fallacy*: but I will tell you once for all, what I have been taught. The *Church* must subsist upon such *Principles* as will transmit it and preserve it throughout all *Ages*. The *Church* is the same wherever it is found in any *Nation*; it is not confin'd to *Rome* or *Carthage*,

In what Sense it belongs to the Ca.Ch. 13
thage, to France or England; it may leave these Parts, and be settled in those that are now the darkest Corners of the Earth, and God, so I have been told, may again light up the seven Candlesticks of Asia: So that Succession too, in your sense, being merely local, is no more a Note of the Church than Duration; but Succession of the true Doctrine, and Succession of true Pastors, derived from any present or former Branches of the Church, will always denominate any Church to be a Christian Church, and all such Churches will, according to my Instructions, ever make up the Catholic Church. These are Principles, as I am taught, on which the Catholic Church will stand for ever, wherever dispers'd throughout the World.

Pr. And are not all these found in the Church of Rome? and is she not therefore the Catholic Church?

C. M. No more in the Church of Rome than in the Church of England, nor so much neither, as I shall prove before we have done: I do rather give Hints on which our Divines can argue with you, than take upon me to argue my self.

Pr. And so you would put the English Church upon a Level with the Church of Rome; you won't pretend that your Communion is as extensive as ours?

C. M. No, we don't: but were our Communion as extensive as yours, we should not pretend to be the Catholic Church. The Greek Communion, I am told, is more extensive than yours, and yet the Greek Church, as such, do's not pretend to be the Catholic Church.

Pr.

14 *Pope not Universal Bishop.*

Pr. But we do. We only have the *Universal Bishop* among us, and are therefore the *only Catholic Church*.

C. M. Your *Bishop* is no more *Universal*, than your *Church* is *Catholic*: That is the Absurdity we charge upon you; but to show you how much I have consider'd this Point, I must acquaint you, that I have heard one of our *Instructors* endeavour, as I thought at first, to take off the Absurdity of your *particular Church's* pretending to be the *Universal Church*; and he went as far in it as he could, further, it is said, than any of yourselves have gone.

Pr. Will you *Heretics* pretend to vindicate our Cause better than we our selves; if you do, How glorious an Argument is it of the Force of Truth, and the Strength of self Conviction! But I want to hear, pray what did he say?

C. M. He said that any *Advocate* of the *Church of Rome* might reply, *She* was not so absurd as to confine the *Catholic Church* within the Walls of *Rome*, no, nor yet within the *Pope's Province*, but that it was extended to all within her Communion. So *France* and *Spain*, and all *Popish Countrys*, as we call them, are in their sense Members of the *Catholic Church*: and that therefore possibly we were under a Mistake, and Absurdity our selves in Charging the *Church of Rome* with an Absurdity for saying, that *she* is the *Catholic Church*, as if *she* should say, that *she* being but a *particular Church*, was at the same time the *universal Church*, whereas *she* comprehends many *Churches* and *Nations* within her Communion.

Pr.

A Rule in Controversy. 15

Pr. Now, my honest *Countryman*, I like thee, I begin to conceive some good Hopes of thee: I find you have some sensible impartial Men of your way. Pray, who was it, that was so just to the Truth, and so fair in stating this Argument.

C. M. It may do him a Prejudice perhaps to name him, and in good sooth, Sir, let me tell you, that I did not know what to think of him my self, as well as I love him, when I heard him talk in that way, and most of us thought, that he was *Papishly* given, if he were not a *Papist* all out; but he soon perceiv'd, how we star'd and look'd, and so guess'd what was the Matter. Upon which he told us: 'That
'in treating any Opinions of our Adversarys
'we should always be most religiously careful
'to do them Justice, to give them their full
'Strength and Weight, and so far as we could
'clearly disprove them, to lay them aside, and
'no farther. In this Point, and perhaps, says
'he, in some others I may place the Romish
'Tenents in a more advantagious Light, than
'even themselves have set them in; for I fear
'not to do Right to any Opinions, and am
'above any little Imputations; but if when I
'have done them that Justice, I can confute
'them, they are confuted to the Purpose and
'beyond all Reply.

Pr. This is as it should be, let the most *learned* of your *Doctors* do us only this *Justice*, and then we are sure they will see their Error. But they have a Knack at Dressing up our Doctrine in what Colours they please, and when they have taken

16 *Ca. Ch. by Papists confin'd to Rome.*

taken off what themselves had laid on, That they call *Confuting*.

C. M. But the Person, I speak of, did not so. He always sets you out in your own Colours, unless, where the Case will possibly bear it, he is willing, he says, to put the best and most favourable Construction upon your Doctrines.

Pr. However, he gave up this Point, I suppose, and then if you believe him, you must believe, that the *Church of Rome* is the *Catholic Church*.

C. M. Not so hasty, Sir, neither; *Fair and Softly go's far*. What would you think now? Why, as sure as you are alive, he gave the Business a Turn, and made it out quite the other way, Point-blank against you.

Pr. I don't understand these Tricks: he is a *Sophister*, I must tell you, if he argues backwards and forwards. Can he yield a Point first, and retrieve it afterwards? You should suspect such *Jugglers*, my Friend.

C. M. Ay, but there was no *Juggling* in the Case, all was fair and above board, I do assure you, and if I can remember, I will tell you how he proceeded. --- 'But still, says he, *Neighbours*, 'the *Romish Doctors* confine the *Catholic Church* 'to the *Pope's Chair*. There is their *Center* of 'Unity, and in that is seated the *Plenitude* of 'Power: that the *Roman Communion* is of such 'an *Extent*, that is only *accidental*: it may be of 'a wider or of a narrower Compass, and should 'France and Spain, and all foreign Countrys shake 'off the *Pope's Dominion*, and leave his Communion, still according to them, *Rome* would be
the

'the *Catholic Church*, and all those *Kingdoms* be
'accounted no *Churches* at all, any more than
'*We*, who renounced their Communion near two
'hundred Years ago.

Pr. And is it not true? may not *God's Church*
be confin'd to one *Family*, to a *Few*? How was it
when *God* call'd *Abraham*? and till the Children
of *Israel* increased? Afterwards, was not the
Church reduced to the Number of ^a *seven thousand*
only in the Kingdom of *Israel*? And how did
the *Church* of *Christ* begin? Was it not at first
compos'd of a *few* Members? and may it not
be reduced to a *few* again? So that the *Catholic*
Church may well be confin'd within the Walls of
Rome, if all the *World* besides should renounce
her Communion.

C. M. 'This in the mean time, he said, was
'a *Demonstration*, that you did not call the *Church*
'of *Rome Catholic*, because of its *Extent*, but be-
'cause of the *Pope's Pretensions*. So that when
'the *Church* of *Rome* calls herself the *Catholic*
'*Church*, it was the *same thing*, as if any *particu-*
'*lar Church* should call it self the *Church Univer-*
'*sal*, or a *part* pretend to be the *whole*;" which
we all understood very well, and so I think, Sir,
you are not so much obliged to him, as you
imagin'd.

Pr. Yes truly, I think my self very much ob-
liged to him still, and especially for contra-
dicting himself so notoriously. For can he sup-
pose that all Nations shall leave our *Church*, and
then that there is any *Church* left besides?

C. M. This way of Talking I have been taught

18 *Other Churches beside the Roman.*

to call *Quibbling*. But this may very well be suppos'd, unless in the first place you will suppose, that all *Christians* are of the *Romish* Communion, and unless in the next place you will suppose, that *all*, who leave your Communion, do turn *Heathens, Turks, or Jews*. I have heard and I do believe it, that if you compare your *Church* with all other *Societys* of *Christians* all over the World, you bear but a very small Proportion to them: Will you say, that they are no *Churches*? If you are so hardy, as by your Principles, I am told, you must be, I should be glad to know, how you prove your Assertion. I have been told, that the *Churches* of *Asia* and *Africa* never own'd any Subjection to the *Church* of *Rome*, and their Correspondence with *Rome* was no more than with any other *See*, to keep up and testify Communion with *that* and every *particular Church*. I have heard, as simple as I stand here, all your common Arguments, and have been taught to answer them, and for that Reason all those Scriptures, you pour'd out upon me, did not convince me at all.

Pr. I told you before, that the *Church* of *Rome* was by *Right* the *Universal Church*, there being no *Church* besides: I mean, no other, that is truly and properly a *Church*, for your *Church* of *England* is only a *nominal Church*, improperly so call'd in the way of common Speaking; and I founded the Claim of the *Church* of *Rome* upon the clear Word of *God*, and the express Donation of Supremacy by our *Lord* himself to *St Peter*, *Thou art Peter, &c.*

C. M. But I have been very well instructed,
that

No Power given to Pet. over other Ap. 19

that those *Texts* are nothing to the Purpose: that the same Power which our *Lord* gives there unto *Peter*, he ^a gives afterwards in the most solemn Manner to *all* the *Apostles*; and therefore that those *Texts*, you mention'd, convey no *Supremacy* and *Pre-eminence* to *St Peter*, at least not in Exclusion of, and not over the other *Apostles*: and that the *Apostles* acknowledged no such *Supremacy* in him is very plain, especially from *St Paul's* Conduct, who ^b withstood him to his Face. As to his being *Bishop* of *Rome*, I am told, we may safely yield that *he* was so, tho' it is far from being evident beyond all Controversy, that *he* was so; but that he exercised there any Act of *Supremacy* at all, or any where else, more than the other *Apostles*, there is not the least Intimation: On the contrary, we find *St Paul* looks upon himself as charg'd with the Care of *all* the *Churches*, and having enumerated all the Sufferings and Hardships he had undergone, he reckons that Care as a Burden laid upon him, which added to the Weight of all his other Troubles, as if he had said: ^c *Besides those things that are without*, let me mention, *that which cometh upon me daily the Care of all the Churches*. How would you have triumphed, could you have found such a *Text* for *St Peter's* Title to *Universal Bishop*?

Pr. We have much better, but neither did *St Paul*, nor any from him pretend to such a Title.

^a Matth. XVIII. 18. XXVIII. 18, 19, 20. Mark XVI. 15. Luke XXIV. 48, 49. John XVII. 6, &c. XX. 21, 22, 23. Acts I. 8.
^b Gal. 2. 11. ^c 2 Cor. XI. 28.

C. M. I do not argue from these Words for St Paul, as you would have done in behalf of St Peter, that *he was Universal Bishop*, but only, that this Passage is an Argument against your Pretensions for St Peter; and it is remarkable, that as an Instance of his *Care over all the Churches*, we find St Paul exercising an *Apostolical Power* at Rome, both in Person and by his *Epistle*, without taking notice of or so much as mentioning St Peter.

Pr. But you will see this remarkable Difference between them: St Paul's *Epistles* are only *Particular*, St Peter's are *General* or *Catholic*, which is an Argument against any Pretensions, you may set up for St Paul against him.

C. M. I am setting up no Pretensions for St Paul; I am only *pulling down* your Pretensions for St Peter: But I will tell you, there is nothing in an *Epistle's* being *Catholic* or *Particular*.

Pr. Yes sure a *Catholic Epistle* shou'd a wider Command.

C. M. If you are in earnest, what think you of the *second* and *third Epistles* of St John? They are stil'd *Catholic*, tho' directed *each* to a *particular Person*, and therefore tho' St Paul's are not call'd *Catholic Epistles*, yet they might be of *Catholic Use*, to be read in *all the Churches of the Saints*; and that he design'd they should be more generally communicated, we learn from his Command to the *Colossians*, ^a *When this Epistle is read amongst you, cause that it be read also in the Church of Laodicea, and that ye also read the Epistle from Laodicea.*

^a Coloss. IV. 16.

St Paul's how Catholic. 21

Pr. I suppose, the *Apostle* might mean, that the *Colossians* should read the *first Epistle* to *Timothy*, which was written from *Laodicea*; or else an *Epistle*, which he had wrote to the *Laodiceans*, and they had sent to *Colosse*: the latter Opinion is generally embrac'd, but this is far from shewing, that his *Epistles* are *Catholic*.

C. M. If this will not do, let me ask you, What you think of his *Epistle* to the *Romans*? Is *that* a *Catholic Epistle*, or not?

Pr. Thou art a puzzling Fellow, and I don't care to answer thee: What was directed to *Rome* was directed to the *Catholic Church*.

C. M. But the *Epistle* to the *Romans* is as much an *Epistle* to a *particular Church*, as *that* to the *Corinthians*. You may consider *how far* this affects your Claim to be the *Catholic Church*.

Pr. Not at all. How is the *Catholic Church* concern'd in this Dispute? What signifies it, whether the *Epistles* be *Catholic*, or to *particular Churches*?

C. M. Whatever it signifies, it is of your own moving: You thought, I warrant, to amuse me with those *plausible Sounds*; but, since you have fallen upon this Point, I do insist upon it, that *St Paul's* are *Catholic Epistles*, as much as those, that are so stiled: so you could have got no Advantage over me there.

Pr. Well, thou art full of thy Proofs. How dost thou prove that *Particulars* are *Generals*?

C. M. That's an Exploit, I leave to such Wonder-workers as you, to erect a *Particular* into an *Universal*. But that an *Epistle* even to a *particular Person*, may be stil'd *Catholic*, I have prov'd from

Pr.

22 *Acknowledged so by St Peter.*

from *two* of *St John's Epistles*; and if *St Paul's* own Authority, which I cited, will not do for *His*, I will give you *St Peter's*, which is an Authority, I suppose, above all exception.

Pr. What dost thou mean? that *St Peter* called or acknowledged *St Paul's* to be *Catholic Epistles*.

C. M. I mean nothing but what I have heard made out to my Apprehension. *St Peter* do's not indeed *call them so*, but he *acknowledges St Paul's Epistles* to be *Catholic*. His own *Epistles* are call'd *Catholic*, and in his *second* he tells us, that *Paul* also had written to *them*, to *whom he then wrote*: for consider his Words, I pray you,
^a *Even as our beloved Brother Paul also, according to the Wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you.*

Pr. However *that's* but *one Epistle*, and perhaps, if it be not *that* to the *Hebrews*, it is lost.

C. M. Supposing *it that* to the *Romans*; why then *St Peter* shews, that *St Paul's Epistle* to the *Romans* was sent to, and read in all those *Countrys* and *Churches*, to *whom St Peter* wrote his *Catholic Epistles*: and what may be said of the *Epistle* to the *Romans*, is likewise *true* of *all the rest*, as appears from the next verse, if you do but mind the Connection, ^b *Even as our beloved Brother Paul also hath written unto you, --- As also in all his Epistles speaking in them of these things, --- Of which Epistles* he gives this *Character*, and *them* this *Caution*, ^c *in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own Destruction.*

^a 2 Ep. Pet. III. 15. ^b Vers. 15, 16. ^c Ibid.

No Necessity of a Visible Head. 23

Pr. And what do you infer from all this?

C. M. I infer nothing at all at present. I may make another *use* of this Passage perhaps, as we talk on: This is a Discourse of your own beginning, but in this nor in any thing that you have said, do I find any Proof, that *Rome* is the *Universal Church*, or that *St Peter* is *Universal Bishop*, any more than *St Paul*: nor do I see that *St Peter* either *had* or *claim'd* or *exercis'd* any *Superiority* or *Command* over the *other Apostles* in any *Respect* whatsoever.

Pr. *St Peter* was manifestly the *Head* and *Prince* of the *Apostles*: He had the *Primacy* among *them*, that your own Writers have acknowledged: there must be some *Center of Unity*, some *Fountain of Power*, and if we had no other Testimony, where should it be so naturally placed as in *St Peter*?

C. M. I have been taught, Sir, that there is no necessity of any *Visible Center of Unity*, or any *Visible Fountain of Power* to be placed in one Person: The true *Center of Unity* and *Fountain of Power* we are directed to by *St Paul* in his *Epistles* to the *Ephesians* and *Colossians*, and to the *Fountain of Power* by our *Lord* himself; but if there was any *Visible Center*, I have been taught, that it was at *Jerusalem*, and not at *Rome*, and in the *College of the Apostles*, not in any one *single Apostle*: not in *St Peter*, for he was not *Primate there*; if *Personal*, rather in *St James*. But I am told, the better Opinion is, that the *Center of Unity* and *Fountain of Power* was placed in all

^a Eph. II. 22, 23. III. 20, 21, 22. IV. 4, 5, 6. V. 15, 16. Col. II. 19.
^b Matth. XXVIII. 18.

24 *The Grand Text Explain'd.*

the *Apostles* under *Christ* their *Head*. They were first locally found at *Jerusalem*; there the *Gospel* was first preach'd by the *Apostles*, and from thence propagated over all the *World*.

Pr. And, as I said before, will this way of Teaching, think you, set aside those express *Texts*, which I do insist upon for the *Supremacy* of *Christ's Vicar* the *Successor* of *St Peter*, and the *Authority* of the *Church* first vested in the *Person* of *St Peter* by our *Lord* himself? I must repeat them. *Thou art Peter, &c.*

C. M. As for the Text alleg'd: *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church*, I am told, 'tis nothing to the Purpose, for it is not said *upon Thee will I build my Church, but upon this Rock*, which, I am told, is another Word, and not of the same Gender, as I think they call it, with *Peter*, and I have been taught to understand this *Rock* of *Peter's Confession*, and not of *Peter's Person*. Now his *Confession* was; ^a *Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God*: So that the *Church* is built upon this *Rock* indeed, but then this ^b *Rock* is *Christ*. As for the Gift of the *Keys* —

Pr. Dost thou think I shall stand to hear thee expound *Scripture*? Whose Sense, whose Interpretation is to prevail, the *Church's* or *thine* dost think?

C. M. Sir, pray ye don't be offended: I am but a poor Man: I am not conceited, I hope, I do not lean to my own Understanding: *What I say, I have been taught*: I have much such *Explanations* for the rest of your *Texts*, but I see

^a Matth. XVI. 16. ^b 1 Cor. X. 4.

No want of an Infallible Guide. 25

you can't hear them with Patience, and so I have done, especially since you seem to be going off to new *Matter*.

Pr. Well, but supposing the *Church* best able to interpret *her* own *Scriptures*; wilt not thou rather believe the *Church*, who is a *sure* and *infallible Guide*, than depend on any *Blind private fallible Guide* whatever?

C. M. As for such an *infallible Guide* as you boast of, I have heard much talk of him, but for my part I do not find that I want such an *one*, and I can't tell where to find him, if I did.

Pr. To say you know no want of a *Guide* is Arrogance, and Pride, and Presumption; and that you can't find *him* is no wonder, when you never look for him.

C. M. Sir, I am neither Proud, nor Conceited, I am a plain simple Man, that am willing to learn, and I do learn of a *Guide*, whose *Directions*, I think, I am bound to follow.

Pr. You mean, I suppose, your *Parish Priest*, but is not *he* a *fallible Man*? and how can you be sure, that he teaches and directs you *right*?

C. M. I am as sure of *his Direction*, as any of your People can be of their *Priest's Direction*; for I suppose the *Papish Priests*, as we call them, are no more *infallible* than *Ours*.

Pr. Our *Priests* are *fallible*, that's true, but they take their *Doctrine* from an *infallible Church*, and as long as they teach *that Doctrine*, they may be said to be *infallible*.

C. M. And our *Priests* take their *Doctrines* from the *Scriptures*, *which*, we are sure, are in themselves an *infallible Rule*, and as long as they

D

teach

26 *No use of such a Guide.*

teach nothing, but what is *evidently taught* in the *Scriptures*, we may with more reason say, that *so far they also are infallible*.

Pr. But can they be sure themselves, that they teach nothing, but what is taught in *Scripture*? and then much less can you be sure of it.

C. M. I may with as much reason ask, how your *Priests* are sure, that *they teach* what your *Church teaches*? and then, how are the *People* sure, that *they do so*?

Pr. This shews the *Perverseness* of your *Priests*, and the *Simplicity* of such poor well-meaning *People*, as you. Why you must needs observe the great Difference between *our Church*, and *yours*: Our *Priests* indeed do not pretend to be *infallible* any more than *yours*, but even *your Church* is *fallible* by your own Confession, whereas *our Church* is *infallible*.

C. M. I have been told, that your *Church* is no more *infallible* than *ours*, but suppose your *Church* was *infallible*, pray what Difference is there as to both *Priests* and *People* between *yours* and *ours*?

Pr. What? no Difference between an *infallible* and a *fallible Church*?

C. M. No, not as to *Priest* and *People*: for I have heard it discoursed, that as long as your *Priests* are *fallible*, they can't be *infallibly* sure, that they deliver the *Doctrine* in the *same Sense*, their *infallible Church* has *defin'd* it in: and that supposing the *Priests* *infallible* as well as the *Church*, still, unless the *People* were *infallible* too, they could never be *sure*, that the *infallible Priest* did *truly deliver* the *Doctrine* of the *infallible Church*.

Pr.

He may be Misunderstood. 27

Pr. This is strange, and absurd: this is perverse to the last degree. Do not you see, how you are blinded by these Men? How the *Blind lead the Blind*? For when *He* that speaks is *infallible*, how is it possible that the *People* should be mistaken?

C. M. I am, Sir, neither so absurd, nor perverse, as you imagine. I suppose, you will allow, that *Christ* himself, *infallible* as *he was*, was sometimes not understood, and often misunderstood by his *Disciples*; and as long as 'tis possible for Men to take what is spoken in a Sense any way different from what the Speaker intended, they must be taught some *infallible Way* not to mistake, or the *meer Infallibility* of their *Teacher* will not lead them into the Truth.

Pr. Thou talkest at such a rate, as is enough to make *a wise Man mad*. Where is there any Possibility of Mistake, when *he* that speaks, is *infallible*, and is believ'd upon the *Account* of his *Infallibility*?

C. M. I say, there is; for People must understand what it is they believe, before they can be said to believe: and if they happen not to understand aright, all this *Infallibility* is to no Purpose, unless you will say, they must *submit* to *Sounds* without regarding their *Signification*.

Pr. The *People* must, I conceive, be suppos'd to understand *What* is *spoken*, and if they are found to *misunderstand*, they must be taught *better*, till they understand *aright*.

C. M. That is, till *their Reason* is better *informed*, or more properly, till they are so *in-*

28 *Christ and his Ap. tho' Infallible*

structed and convinc'd, that their Reason at last forms a true Judgment of your Doctrine.

Pr. This is the most provoking *Herefy* that was ever heard of: this is at once to take away all Certainty, and to involve the World in perpetual Doubts and Disputations: Will you or your Guides have the Front to say, that *fallible Reason* shall be the *Judge of Infallibility*?

C. M. Sir, I have been taught, that *God* who gave us *Reason*, doth in all things deal with us as *reasonable Creatures*, and therefore, tho' *He* is doubtless *Infallible* in the *Revelation of his Works*, and *his Will* to Mankind, yet *He* doth nevertheless apply to their *Reason*, when he requires their *Belief*. *This* from the *Scriptures* is very plain, and most remarkable it is, that *Christ* and his *Apostles*, *infallible* as they were, *Himself Essentially* so, his *Apostles* by the Assistance of his *Holy Spirit*, did ever proceed, where they would convince, in a *Way of Reason*. ^a *Search the Scriptures*, saith our *Lord*: and so do his ^b *Apostles* send the *Jews* to the *sacred Writings*: their Discourses were still an *Appeal to Scripture*, and *Reason*: to Both with the ^c *Jews*; to *Reason* with the ^d *Gentiles*.

Pr. It is true, they did condescend so far to convince Men at first, but after *their Infallibility* was once acknowledg'd, whatever they deliver'd might be taken on their *Word*.

C. M. Ay, it might be; but, as it happen'd, it was quite otherwise: Our *Lord himself* was

^a John V. 39. ^b Acts II. III. VIII. 26. Chap. X. 37, 43, &c. ^c See the Places above. ^d Acts XIV. 15, &c. Ch. XVII. 22, &c. and in the Epistles throughout.

Appeal to Scripture and Reason. 29

ever ready to satisfy, and answer any Questions of his *Disciples*. *Nicodemus* acknowledg'd our Lord to be a ^a *Teacher come from God*, and consequently *Infallible*, yet when our Lord declar'd, that ^b *except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God*, and further tells him in answer to his first Question, that ^c *except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*; *Nicodemus* did not rest in the *Infallibility*, but made bold to demand, ^d *How can these things be?* and our Lord doth not reprove him for asking, but only for his *Ignorance*. ^e *Art thou a Master in Israel, and knowest not these things?* Afterwards the *Epistles* are a full Evidence, that the *Apostles* still appeal'd to the *Reason* of their *Converts*. ^f *I speak as to wise Men, judge ye what I say*, saith St Paul. What think you of these Words, Sir?

Pr. I think thou art the oddest prating Fellow, I ever met with in my Life; but I will answer thee according to thy Folly, and confound thee at once: The *Apostles* suffer'd their *Converts* to use their *Reason*, because by their *Infallibility* they could restrain them at Pleasure, and set them right, when they were wrong: but now all Points having been settled by them, except such as the Church hath since determined, or may determine hereafter, all People are to rest in that *Infallibility* and *Power*, which our Lord first invested them in, and in the Person of St Peter gave to his Church for ever.

C. M. Here is a great variety of Matter laid

^a John III. 2. ^b v. 3. ^c v. 5. ^d v. 9. ^e v. 10. ^f I Corin. X. 15. XI. 13.

together;

30 *Suffered all Men to examine.*

together; you are forced to yield, that our Lord and his *Apostles*, notwithstanding their *Infallibility*, suffer'd all sorts of *Persons* to use their *Reason*, and *examine* what they said; nay they encouraged them to do so, and the *Bereans* are commended for so doing, as *People* of a free and more ingenuous Mind. ^a *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they receiv'd the Word with all readiness of Mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so, which is an Examination your Church will not allow.* This you cannot deny, for it is *Fact*, and therefore you go about to account, why *that* was permitted then, which is not permitted now. But if the *Apostles* allow'd of *Examination*, because by their *Infallibility* they could rectify all *Mistakes*, methinks your Church, if she be infallible, might allow it too, and your *Infallibility* looks the more suspicious, when upon that Pretence you deny Men the use of their Reason.

Pr. We do not deny Men the use of their Reason, only we will not suffer you or any Body else to dispute the *Doctrines* and *Determinations* of the Church.

C. M. If the *Doctrines* of your Church be no other than the *Scriptures* teach, that is no other than are taught by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, we do not desire to dispute them: it is the Business of our learned Men to vindicate them against all sorts of *Herseys* whatsoever; but you depart from this Rule: you pretend *Authority* to add to and diminish from the Word of God: to make new *Articles* of Faith, and impose new *Terms* of

^a Acts XVII. 11.

The Doct. of the Ch. fixed by Script. 31

Salvation. This yourself have *own'd*, in what you lately deliver'd, and well may you *own* it, for it is *one* of the boasted *Prerogatives* of your *Church*.

Pr. Is any *private Person*, or any *particular Church*, such as this of *England*, to prescribe Bounds to the *Catholic Church*, and teach *her* what *Articles of Faith* she ought to require?

C. M. The *Church of England* in this case only vindicates herself, *she* sets no Bounds, *she* prescribes no Rules to the *Catholic Church*, *she* derives all her Rules and Practice from the *Catholic Church*, as the *Catholic Church* derives her Faith from the *Scriptures*, and all sound parts of the *Church* from the first *Ages*: For as to *Articles of Faith*, they were antecedent to the *Catholic Church*, they were the very *Doctrine* and *Foundation*, *she* was form'd upon; and therefore no Article is to be propos'd as an Article of *Faith*, which was not taught and requir'd by our *Lord* and his *Apostles*.

Pr. Is not this setting Bounds to the Authority of the *Church*? and if the *Church* requires assent to any Articles, that do not *seem* to be *explicitely* contain'd in the *Ancient Creeds*, are not we to *suppose*, that this was the *Original Faith*, tho' not *then deliver'd* in so many Words, as it is now expressed in?

C. M. We do not set any Bounds to the *Church*; *she* was bounded at first by our *Lord* himself as to all Points of *Faith*. ^a *Other Foundation can no Man lay, than that which is laid;*
^b *Other Gospel must no Man preach, than that the*

^a 1 Cor. III. 11. ^b Gal. I. 8, 9.

Apostles

32 *Ch. of Engl. Agreement with it.*

Apostles preach'd: This is the Limitation, and if your *Pope* were an *Angel* of *Heaven*, yet accursed shall he be, that preaches any other *Gospel*, than that ye have received.

Pr. So say I too: and we do accordingly pronounce them accursed, that preach or receive any other *Doctrine* than that, which the *Church* delivers; and so you, and all *Heretics* denying the *Doctrine* of the *Church*, do fall under this *Condemnation*.

C. M. This is very extraordinary indeed; and so you would turn this dreadful *Sentence* upon us, as if we taught another *Gospel*, than was taught by the *Apostles*: we teach indeed not altogether what you deliver for *Gospel*, but in this I am clearly instructed, and can boldly make a Challenge, as simple as I stand, 'that we do 'entirely agree with the *Doctrine* of the *Apostles*, 'and that you do not, any further than you agree with us.

Pr. How can you tell whether you agree or not, when you are not certain so much as of the *Scriptures*? much less can you be certain of the *Doctrine* deliver'd in them, and held by the *Church*.

C. M. We are as certain of the *Scriptures*, and of the *Doctrine* contain'd in them as you are: This is an old beaten Road, and I will venture to say, we are more certain than you are.

Pr. Thou art a very impudent Fellow, only it is in Charity to thy Soul, or this is not to be endur'd: I say, you have no certainty of what is *Scripture*, or what is not *Scripture* at all.

C. M. I stand to my Point, Sir, and do say, that

Antiquity of the Ch. of England. 33

that we have at least as much certainty as you. Why should we not for those *Books*, in which we are both agreed? and because we do not agree upon all, that is, because you obtrude *uninspir'd Books* for *Divine*, I say, we have more certainty upon the whole than you.

Pr. How came you by this *Certainty*? From *whom* did you receive the *Scriptures*? from *what Church*? upon *what Authority*? you are but of *Yesterday*, and you pretend to any *Certainty*?

C. M. Yes, Sir, we do. We have the same *Scriptures*, we had before this Nation was subjected to the See of *Rome*: We are not of *yesterday*, we are as *old* as our first *Conversion* long before *Austin* the Monk, we were a *Church*, before we came under the *Roman Yoke*, and we did not cease to be a *Church*, when we broke from it; we left your Communion indeed, but we only returned to our Primitive State at the *Reformation*; and so much may serve to your idle *Clamor*, and importunate silly *Demand*, Where was your *Church* before *Luther*? We were ever a *Church*, since the first Planting of the *Gospel* in this *Island*; we were most corrupt indeed, when joyn'd with you, but we lost neither our *Church*, nor our *Scriptures*, when we cast off the *Pope's Dominion*.

Pr. You are deceiv'd in your History by the Glosses of cunning Men, all *Christians* from the Beginning were subject to *Christ's Vicar* the *Pope*; but you run upon one part of my Question only, and avoid the main Point, which I challenge you and all *Protestants* upon, that you have no *Scriptures*, but what you receiv'd from us.

34 *Canon of Scripture how settled.*

C. M. As to your first *Affertion*, 'tis manifestly false, and has been refuted before: As to your *Challenge*, I am inform'd, that we have receiv'd the *Scriptures* handed down from Age to Age, as they were first deliver'd by the sacred *Penmen*, till they were attested by their being received into the *Canon*, I think they call it, and as they have been transmitted to us in that *Canon* thro' all successive *Ages*. Now if the *Church* was able from the Beginning to ascertain what was *Scripture*, and what was *not*, and so form'd the *Canon* upon the Evidence and Attestation of those *Primitive Bishops*, with whom those *Sacred Treasures* were deposited, we are as certain as long as we are possessed of that *Canon*, as you can be. For we receive the *Scriptures* upon the *Testimony* of those who made and compleated the *Canon*; and their *Testimony* cannot be doubted, if we consider, how near they liv'd to the *Apostles* Times, how careful they were in examining the *Testimony* of every *Church*, which had the Keeping of any part of the *sacred Writings*, and the Impossibility of imposing any *spurious Pieces* upon the World: To all this I may add, as I have heard the Case very fully and very clearly stated, that the *Enemys of Christianity*, however they opposed the *Doctrines*, did never question the *Genuinness* of those *Scriptures*, which supported them.

Pr. Very well; but still it was the *Authority* of the *Church*, that made the *Canon*, and so you may observe, how you are forc'd to come round to us, whether you will, or no: for you can never be assur'd of the *Canon*, unless you acknowledge,

ledge, that *they* who compil'd it, or more properly the *Pope*, and the *Church*, which made it, were *infallible*. This you will grant at last I suppose.

C. M. No indeed, but I won't. I have heard that we are in the dark as to many Circumstances: It doth not appear, that any part of the *Canon* was made at *Rome*, much less that the *Pope* presided; it is only a Supposition, that the *Epistolar Canon*, as I think they call'd it, was made there; but we take the *Whole* upon the *Authority* of great and undoubted *Evidence* deliver'd in by every *Church* concerning *those Scriptures*, which they testified to be writ by those *sacred Authors*, whose *Names* they bear: They did not appeal to the *Bishop* of *Rome*, nor to a *Roman Council*, but the *Whole Assembly* were *Judges*, *All* weigh'd the *Evidence*, and *All* agreed in the *Establishment* of *such Books*, as they receiv'd. This I have heard discours'd, as well as I can remember.

Pr. Why what a tedious long learned Speech have you made! It is a Misfortune for such Fellows as you, to have so good a Memory, and to grow a sort of half Schollars by Hearsay; but cannot you find, that the *Determination* must be made by *infallible Authority*? and where is that *Authority* but in the *Church*?

C. M. Still you take *your Church* for the *Catholic Church*, and roundly pronounce *your selves Infallible*; but as far as *your Church* is concern'd in the *Canon*, that is, in making it differ from that *anciently* receiv'd, I am told, that *she* came but *late* to the Work, and then by Virtue of her

Infallibility she made that to be Scripture which never was Scripture, and canonised those Books for *Inspir'd*, which the *Jews* always reckon'd *Apocryphal*: Who, I pray, should know the Canon of the *Old Testament* best? the *Jewish Writers*, or your *Trent Council*? If the *Scriptures* were to be settled by your *Infallibility*, we might not be assur'd of one Book's being truly *inspir'd*, when by mixing your *Apocryphal Ware*, you would destroy the Credit of the *sacred Writings*, and render the whole Canon suspected.

Pr. Have not *Christians* a clearer *Revelation*, than the *Jews*? do not we know more of the *Scriptures*, than they?

C. M. No, nor so much of their *old Canon*, as they did, who settled it, and therefore the *Christian Church* was only careful to know what Books were undoubtedly receiv'd by the *Jews*, and those she hath also received. There was no need of *Infallibility* to determine a *Fact* of this Nature, and both the *Canons* stand upon the same *Foundation* of great and undoubted *Testimony*.

Pr. Without *Infallibility* how can you know that the *Testimony* it self is true? Is not the *Church Judge* of the *Testimony*?

C. M. The *Church* it self it is, I do not mean your *Church*, that bears this *Testimony*: She is the great *Witness* in this important Cause: She witnesseth to the *World*, that upon the strictest Enquiry, which *Facts* of this Nature are capable of, she finds every Book, which she receives, to be *Genuin*: as such in all *Ages* she hath kept them, and delivered them down to us agreeable to her sacred *Trust*,
as

as the *Witness* and ^a *Keeper* of *Holy Writ*: there hath been no *Variation* in any *Church*, but yours, which hath proudly presum'd to *impose Apocryphal Books*, and so to *falsify* the *Canon*.

Pr. That is a very high *Charge* upon an *infallible Church*, I must tell you, and deserves *another* kind of *Answer* than I can give you at present; but I consider you are taught by your *Priest* to talk like a *Parrot*. Why this very *Argument* of thine, that seems so much against it, doth most strongly prove the *Infallibility* of the *Church*: for the *Church* cannot be mistaken in so *Fundamental* a Point, and consequently in what *she* determines, *she* must be *Infallible*.

C. M. Surely, Sir, this is too palpable, too gross to pass on any reasonable Man: but I answer, all *Churches* will never agree in such a *Mistake*, your *Church* may go by it self, but the *Catholic Church* has otherwise determin'd. What has *Infallibility* to do in this *Case*? all the *Infallibility* that can be required, or supposed amounts to no more than the utmost *Certainty* a *Fact* of this *Nature* is capable of: So I have heard some of our learned Men argue. In short, Sir, we need desire no *Infallibility* more than the utmost *Certainty* that *Facts* afford, and that is no more than every Man hath in himself, who is *infallibly* assur'd, for Instance, *that there is a God*.

Pr. What a work dost thou make with *Infallibility*, and knowest not what thou art talking of. This is not properly *what* we mean by *Infallibility*: We mean by it a *Gift*, a *Privilege*, a

Prerogative, which *Christ* gave to his *Church* in the Person of *St Peter* especially, to lead her in- to *all Truth*, and to preserve her from *Error*.

C. M. And pray, Sir, if I may be so bold, *where* do you find this great and invaluable *Gift* conferr'd?

Pr. *Where?* why where should it be found? in the *Scriptures* we find it, especially in those of the *New Testament*, and particularly in the Passages I cited before for the *Authority* and *Infallibility* of the *Church*, and the *Supremacy* of *St Peter*. These Points all hang together, and prove one another: it is a sign indeed, thou knowest much of the Matter to ask such a *Question*! only thou hast been taught a Road of *Heretical* prating against the *Church*, and so thou run'st on without Fear, or Wit, 'till the Proofs of *Infallibility* strike thee to the Ground at last.

C. M. I am a very silly shallow pated Fellow, Sir, I must own, but I am not quite knocked down yet, and would therefore crave your *Patience*, don't be angry, Sir, only give me leave to ask, How came you to know that *Infallibility* was convey'd to your *Church* in the *Scriptures*?

Pr. The *Church* finds it there most clearly convey'd.

C. M. Pray, Sir, excuse a *Fool in his Folly*: I shall ask another silly *Question*; How did the *Church* at first come to know, *What* was *Scripture*, and *what* was *not*?

Pr. Why, thou perverse Fellow, by *Infallibility*.

C. M.

C. M. What before *she* knew, *she* was *infallible*? why you must by your own account be certain of the *Scriptures* before you can pretend to *Infallibility*, and will you go about to argue your *Infallibility* from the *Scriptures*, and the *Scriptures* again from your *Infallibility*? Just as you do the *Authority* of the *Church* from the *Scriptures*, and the *Scriptures* again from the *Authority* of the *Church*. Now this, I am told, proves nothing: 'tis *running round in a Ring*, I think, they say, but in my foolish Fancy, It it just like a *Dog in a Wheel still turning about and about, and never getting a Foot forward*. If this be the Case, we can tell *what* is *Scripture* as well as *you*, we receive it upon the same *Testimony*, which *you* must do; for 'till *you* have *first* got possessed of the *Scriptures*, *you* have no more Pretence to *Infallibility* than we have, and to say the Truth, nor *after* neither.

Pr. Thou pretendest to run the *Circle* upon us, and dost not consider, as indeed the Case is too nice for such clumsy Pates as thine, that *Infallibility* must be *antecedent* to the *Scriptures*, tho' the *Promises* of it are part of those *Scriptures*.

C. M. Yes, Sir, I have been taught to consider in what sense *Infallibility* is *antecedent* to the *Scriptures*, that is, just as *Authors* are *antecedent* to their *Works*: The *sacred Penmen* were *divinely inspir'd* and consequently *infallible*, but what is this to your *Pretensions*? who among you is *divinely inspir'd*? but more of this, as you shall give me occasion.

Pr. Well I shall give thee occasion enough before I have done; if it were not evident from
Scripture,

40 *Rom. Writers reflect on the Scrip.*

Scripture, that the *Church* must be *infallible*, it is evident from *Reason* even from *Necessity*, that *She* must be *so*. It is evident from *Scripture*, as appears by the *Texts*, which I have quoted, they are plain and full to the Point, and I must add, that there is no Sense in the *Scriptures* we allege, unless they import the *Infallibility* and *Authority* of the *Church*, and the *Supremacy* of *St Peter*.

C. M. This is just the sawcy way, your Writers have of treating the *Scriptures*, when they are against them. Yet, Sir, I have shew'd you, how we explain some of those *Texts* otherwise, but supposing they did import the *Infallibility* of the *Church*, it doth not follow that they must be restrain'd to your *Church*: As for *St Peter's Supremacy* we own it as far as *Priority* of Place or *Precedency* goes, but not in your *exorbitant omnipotent* Sense. For my part I am not convinc'd, nor can be by all that your *Church* is able to advance in this Cause: the Difference between us is, that you obtrude what you please upon your *Votarys* by your proud Pretensions to *Infallibility*, we make use of an *infallible Rule*, if rightly understood, which is very possible: you deny this *Rule* as sufficient, and so if your *Infallibility* fails you, you have no sufficient *Rule* at all.

Pr. I shall not dispute that Point with thee just now; thou art running from my Argument, and getting into the *Hackney Common Pad-way* of your *Protestant Writings*: if *Scripture* cannot convince thee, *Reason* even *Necessity* will, that the *Church* must be *Infallible*, for otherwise

we

we can be *certain* of Nothing: we can never come to any *Certainty* in any thing.

C. M. Yes, Sir, by the same means, Men come to a *Certainty* in other Points, they may come to a *Certainty* in *Religion*: I have been told by him, whom I have great Reason to believe, that an honest Mind will never be at a loss, if the Owner of it takes proper Ways, and implores *God's* Blessing upon them. We of this *Church* comparing our *Faith* with the *Scriptures*, and the very *Primitive Ages*, may be assur'd, that we profess the *true Faith* of *Christ*, as long as the *Primitive Historys* are preserved; and we are the more confirm'd, when upon *comparing* we find, that we agree, and you *differ* with *Both*.

Pr. What is this to the Purpose? you can read and compare the *present Doctrines* with the *Ancient*; but what is this to Matters of *Faith*? *there* you must have recourse to *Infallibility* at last.

C. M. But not to *your Infallibility*: whatever is *reveal'd* by *God* we believe to be *true*, because so *reveal'd*; and we do therefore believe that *those*, by whom he reveals *Himself*, are *infallible*: but *Infallibility* is not necessary to those who are to deliver, or who are to receive *his Will* already reveal'd. *Infallibility* in the *Teacher* therefore is only necessary in matters of *Revelation* not *already reveal'd*; but in other Points we may come to an *infallible Certainty* of such Conclusions, as our Understandings are capable of. So that having the reveal'd *Will* of *God* before us, and reverencing it as an *infallible Rule*, we are capable of understanding it, and coming to

42 *Mischiefs of Infallibility.*

a *Certainty* as much as we are capable of understanding the *Terms* of any *Proposition*, or the Sense and Meaning of any thing deliver'd in any Language.

Pr. But this, I say, without an *infallible Guide* you can't attain to: 'tis the Point in debate, and you affirm, and I deny. But I shall further prove it to your entire Conviction.

C. M. I have not barely affirm'd, I have brought such Proofs as I could *remember*, and partly in the very *Words* I have been taught; Only this *Point* takes in several others, or we have dwelt long enough upon it.

Pr. Well I find thou dost begin to flinch: *Infallibility* must needs overcome, and the Use and Benefits of it are so great to Mankind, that I must needs adore it as the greatest *Blessing*, God hath bestow'd upon his *Church*.

C. M. Sir, if I may presume to interrupt this Rapture you are in: to tell you the Truth, Sir, what I have often heard from my *Guide*, I think to be very true, that your *Infallibility* and *Church-Authority* are good for nothing, but to do *Mischief*, and that is a *bold Word* now.

Pr. And thou art a *bold Fellow*, and the *Bolder* because thou art *Blind*: I pity thy *Ignorance*, and would inform thee, and teach thee in the right Way, but 'till thou canst be brought to acknowledge the *Authority* and *Infallibility* of the *Church*, 'tis to no purpose to spend any more Words upon thee.

C. M. Now, Sir, thanking you for your good Will, I can see but two Ways to bring this about, for either you must convince me by *Reason*

Heresys owing to the Abuse of Reas. 43

son and *Argument*, or I must take your bare *Word* for it without chewing upon the Matter. If you propose the *first* Way, I must not only judge for my self, but I am Judge of you, and your *Infallibility* too; and for the *other* Way to take your *Word*, --- you will say perhaps, I have *Reason* to do so, but I must needs say, my *Reason* is but very *small*, if I should submit without any *Reason* at all.

Pr. This *Reason* in you *Heretics* is the Foundation of all the *Sects* and *Schisms*, that have ever pestered the *Christian World*. Look abroad among your *People*, and see the *Face* of your *Protestant Church*: How are you all divided? *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, *Remonstrants*, *Antiremonstrants*! And here in *England* what numbers of *Sects* and *Opinions* abound? all owing to this *Use* of *Reason*: whereas we are all *Uniform* under the *Authority* of the *Church*, and the *Conduct* of our *infallible Guide*.

C. M. That we are *divided* is not owing, as I am informed, to the *Use*, but to the *Abuse* of *Reason*, and these *Abuses* cannot be remedied so long as Men are influenced by *Passion* and *Prejudice*: we must bear with the *Evil* as well as we can, and follow the Example of the *Apostles* both in *Doctrine* and *Discipline*. They were *infallible*, yet they did^a with *Patience*, and in *Meekness* instruct those that opposed themselves, till they found them *incorrigible*, and then they^b rejected them. Such *perverse Opposers* we have also *Authority* to throw out of our *Communion*.

Pr. And will that cure the *Evil*? have *Here-*

^a 2 Tim. II. 24, 25. ^b 1 Tim. I. 20. Tit. III. 10.

tics any regard for *Excommunication*? We are content indeed with *that*, where we can do no more, but there is no effectual way of *extirpating Heresies*, but *extirpating* the *Heretics* themselves. This keeps us *Uniform*, and all of a *Piece*; we suffer no *Divisions* nor *Dividers* among us.

C. M. Why truly your *Inquisitions* are an admirable *Support* to your *Infallibility*; you have no other way to maintain your *infallible Doctrine*, I mean your *Errors*, but by *Blood* and *Fire*, and *Vapor* of *Smoke*.

Pr. Thou liest, like a *cankered Heretic*, as thou art. Do not we maintain our *Doctrines* by *Books*, and *Conference*, and *Conviction*? only where *People* are obstinate, if they belong to us, and are within our *Reach*, we cure them the *other Way*.

C. M. It is better, as I have heard it discoursed, to suffer the worst *Consequences* of *Heresys* and *Schisms*, than to extinguish them, as you do. However, you have *Divisions* among your selves, and those, as I have been told, very *Great* and *Considerable*; only provided they do not break *Communion*, nor openly contradict your *Trent Council*, as they call it, you do indeed in a great measure avoid the *Scandal* of them, even in the very best manner, which is the only way to avoid it, and that is by *tolerating* them.

Pr. They are but small *speculative Differences*: they affect neither the *Infallibility* nor *Authority* of the *Church*; if they should, *Infallibility* and *Authority* would soon refute them.

C. M. What *they* are in particular, I do not enquire at present: I can depend upon the
Charge,

Charge, that they are Great and Considerable in general. And by what you have said, all that I can find is this, Your *Infallibility* and *Authority* can *silence* indeed, but never can *convince*; and if you would be contented to let the *Christian Faith* rest upon the *Plan* of the *Apostles*, there would be no Occasion for them, and you and we should have no *Difference*.

Pr. No *Difference* say you? do you pretend to be a *Reconciler*? will you presume to acquit or condemn? are you, or any of yours *Judge* of the *Church*, and *her Doctrine*?

C. M. Yes, Sir, every Body is a *Judge*, that can compare them with the *Scriptures*, and the *Primitive Church*. For my part I only speak by Information, and so I say again, there is no *Difference* between you and us, but what is of your own *causing*: for we hold all the *Doctrines*, which the *Apostles* delivered, whereas you have *added* many new *Doctrines*, which the *Scriptures* and *first Ages*, nay which *many Ages* of the *Church* were utter *Strangers* to. Here is our *Difference*, and the *Cause* of it: this is the *Good* or rather this is the *Mischief* your *Infallibility* has done. In short, your *Infallibility*, as you manage it, is a manifest *Insult* on the *Reason* of Mankind.

Pr. I must not hear these *Abuses* and *Calumnys* out of such an ignorant foul Mouth, as thine: I say while the *Church* is *infallible*, it is *impossible* *she* should maintain an *Error*.

C. M. I say, *she* doth maintain a World of *Errors*, to say no worse, and therefore by your own Rule I conclude, *she* is not *infallible*. 'You 'have no *Truth* among you, but what you hold
'in

46 *Ch. Pillar & Gr. of Truth explain'd.*

'in *Common* with us: in your *Agreement* with us,
'lies all your *Christianity*: your *Errors* are what
'we properly call your *Popery*.

Pr. What *Errors* thou abusive *Fellow*? is not
the *Church the Pillar and Ground of Truth*? must
she not therefore be *infallible*? and then I say
again, it is impossible for the *Church* to *err*.

C. M. The true *Catholic Church* is indeed the
' *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, as she ever *professes*,
and is the *Conservator* of the true *Faith of Christ*:
But, I say, it is possible for your *Church* to *err*,
for every *Church* in its *turn*, for *Churches* and
Councils to *err*: I am taught, that, they may *err*,
and have *erred*; and that yours, which you vainly
call the *Church*, hath *erred*, and doth *err* more
than any. And if her *Errors* are to be ascrib'd
to any *Cause* more than other, 'tis to your *In-*
fallibility.

Pr. Your making a Noise and a Bawling a-
bout *Errors* is nothing to the Purpose; for as
long as *Infallibility* is necessary to the very *Being*
of the *Church*, her *Doctrines* will be receiv'd as
infallible, notwithstanding you *Heretics* call those
Truths by the name of *Errors*.

C. M. Your *Errors* are enough to put *Infalli-*
bility out of *Countenance*, and do fully prove, that
your *Church* is not *infallible*, tho' we should own,
the *Church* in general is *infallible*: but your Ar-
gument is weak and inconclusive. I am told,
that you might as well pretend, that a perpe-
tual Course of *Miracles* is necessary to the *Being*
of the *Church*, and this you do indeed pretend,
as they are made one *Note* of the *Church*; but

Our Lord's Promise to his Ch. expl. 47

the *Glory* of them is not *Great*, nor is the *Truth* of them *Clear*, nor the *Belief* of them *Easy*, when compar'd with those recorded in the *Scripture*; but this I am fallen into by the By.

Pr. And are not *Miracles* a Proof of *Infallibility*? Thou art confirming what thou pretendest to question.

C. M. I say, Sir, you might as well pretend, that *Miracles* are necessary to the *Being* of the *Church*, as that *Infallibility* is, you'll prove *one* as easily as the *other*, that is, for want of proving *either*, you will prove your *Church* hath *neither*, and consequently is not, if these be necessary, the *Catholic Church*: But to say the *Truth*, your Talk that *Infallibility* is necessary, as you hold it, is needless, vain and idle: For when we are once satisfied, as we are very well without the help of your *Infallibility*, that the *Scriptures* are the *Word of God*, we have all the *Infallibility* we have occasion for, and there is no *Ground* or *Pretence* for any other.

Pr. No? What hath not our *Blessed Saviour* promised his *Apostles* to be with them unto the *End of the World*? and is not this *Promise* understood of his assisting them in the Discharge of their *Office* for ever, and how can this be done, unless *Infallibility* continues in the *Church* unto the *End of the World*?

C. M. This *Promise* is understood of the *ordinary* Discharge of the *Ministerial Function*, as I have been taught, and it cannot be understood otherwise, if it reaches, as indeed it doth, unto the *End of the World*. For if you understand it

48 *Infallible Guide not to be found.*

of the *extraordinary Gifts*, you make it *peculiar* to the *Age of Miracles*: if of *Infallibility* alone, you make it *personal* to the *Apostles*, and *inspir'd Writers*, and it *determin'd* with them. And therefore *Infallibility*, as it descended not to their *Successors*, is not intended in the *Promise*; the same may be said to any other *Scriptures*, which you may produce to the same Purpose.

Pr. Thou art a perverse Disputer; and art train'd up in a cross Interpretation of *Scripture*. Tho' *Infallibility* doth not descend *personally* on the *Successors* of the *Apostles*, yet it is a Grace and Privilege given to the *Church* for ever, and it is not *general* to all *Bishops*, because restrain'd to the *Successor* of St Peter.

C. M. Ay, marry, but you'll have much ado to fix your *Infallibility* there, or indeed any *where* else: We shall have fine work of *Popes* against *Popes*, and *Council* against *Council*, and *Infallibility* against *Infallibility*. And since you have mention'd this, it puts me in mind of what I said in the Beginning upon this Subject, that supposing I wanted an *infallible Guide*, I knew not *where* to find him.

Pr. Why *where* wouldst thou find him, but in the *Catholic Church*?

C. M. But can you tell me, Sir, *whereabouts* in this *Catholic Church* this *Infallibility* is lodg'd, or in what one *Person* or *more* it certainly resides? For if there be no such thing as an *infallible Guide*, we need not enquire any further: and if he cannot be found, or the *Seat* of his *Infallibility* be not known, it is a strong Presumption, my poor *fallible Guide* call'd it a *Demonstration*, that there is *None*.

Pr.

Ch. of Rome uncertain where. 49

Pr. Why, 'tis in the *Church*, 'tis in the *Pope*, 'tis in the *Council*: The Decrees of the *Church* are *infallible*.

C. M. If you can fix the *Seat* of your *Infallibility* with no more *Certainty* than this, I would not give a Fig for it. It is strange you should boast of *Infallibility*, and that *Infallibility* not be able certainly to tell you, in *whom* it resides, or *where* it is placed.

Pr. It is no matter for that, we are sure we have it, we know the *Church* is *infallible*, when she acts as the *Church*; and *Reason* evinces it must be so: You may quibble and cavil as long as you please, we can demonstrate the *Infallibility* of the *Church*, tho' we will not peremptorily *define where* that *Infallibility* is placed.

C. M. I have been told, that this is not owing so much to your *Modesty* as your *Ignorance*. The very Difference of *Opinion* among your *Doctors* about it, is, I think, a *Demonstration* against it.

Pr. We rest in *general* Terms, and that's enough, and then the *Infallibility* of the *Church* is demonstrated beyond all Reply: for was not the Whole *Christian Religion* taught and established by *Infallibility*? were not *Christ* and his *Apostles* *infallible*? is not the *Scripture* it self, according to your *Doctrine*, *infallible*? and if the *Church* of *Christ* was *infallible*, then, is there not the same *Reason*, she should be *infallible still unto the End of the World*?

C. M. I answer, No. Not in your Sense of *Infallibility*, and God can preserve his *Truth* and his *Church* without it. But what is all this to the *Church* of *Rome*, till she appears to be the *Ca-*

50 *The Apostles infallible.*

tholic Church? Is this your *Demonstration*, as you call it? I do not pretend to know the Laws and Rules of *Demonstration*, tho' I have heard something of them, but I can answer this of yours, and shall do it in few Words, if you will give me the Hearing.

Pr. You may babble and prate, but there is no talking against *Demonstration*. Were not *Christ* and his *Apostles infallible?* and must not the *Church* be *infallible* still?

C. M. This is still singing the same Tune: here is nothing new offer'd. But however, to what you say again, and again, *Again* I answer, *No*. That *Christ* and his *Apostles* were *infallible*, we are all agreed; but consider, Sir, if you please, as I have been taught to do, in *what Manner* they were *infallible*, and for *what Purposes*.

Pr. Consider! What should I consider? if they were *infallible*, that is enough: what signify the *Manner* and *Purposes*? what dost thou mean by this round about way to evade my *Demonstration*?

C. M. I mean not to evade, I am not afraid of *forty* such *Demonstrations*: If your *Infallibility* be not like *theirs*, how will you argue from *theirs* to *yours*? Our *blest Lord*, who is *One with the Father*, and who, as the *Son of Man* had not the *Spirit* by ^a *measure*, is of and from himself *infallible*: the *Apostles* by the peculiar Inspiration of the *Holy Ghost*, were also *infallible*; but can you point out at this, or in any time since the very *primitive Age* any Person or Persons, whom you

^a John III. 34.

can attest to be, or to have been so *inspir'd*, as the *Apostles* were? I suppose you will not undertake it.

Pr. What then? *Infallibility* is now a general Direction; we are satisfied, *we have it*.

C. M. I say, you cannot have it without *Divine Inspiration*; so that unless you have at least some *Person* or *Persons Divinely inspir'd*, your Argument from *Christ* and his *Apostles* fails. Be pleas'd in the next place to consider the *Purposes* for which the *Apostles* were thus *inspir'd*, and *infallibly* directed. Now I have been taught, that the *Apostles* being appointed by their *Lord* to preach the *Gospel*: a *Doctrine*, that came from *Heaven*: the *last Revelation* of *God's Will* to Mankind, *they spake, as holy Men of God had spoken in the old time before them, as they were mov'd by the*^a *Holy Ghost*; and this *Doctrine* of theirs, being fully attested and confirm'd by *Miracles*, was to be the *standing Doctrine* of the *Church* for ever. After this was once settled, there was no *Reason* for the *Inspiration* of *Teachers*, or their *Infallibility*; but as the *Converts* made by the *Apostles* did judge of the *Truth*, even of their *Doctrines*, and understood what was taught, by the plain use of their *Reason* assisted by the *Grace* of *God*, in like manner all *future Converts*, and *Disciples* might understand the *Christian Doctrine*, and believe upon that large *Testimony* and *Evidence* our *blessed Lord* and his *Apostles* had given, without Recourse to any, but that *original Infallibility*, with which those *Doctrines* were deliver'd, and to those *Miracles*, by which they were attested.

^a 2 Ep. Pet. I. 21.

52 *Infall. no Guard against Heresys.*

Pr. But still how shall *Error* be avoided, if there be not some *infallible Guide* to lead us into, and keep us in the *Truth*? What will be the Consequence, but endless *Error*, and the *Church of Christ* may fail thereby contrary to his most solemn *Promise*, which holds for *Infallibility*, notwithstanding your Art of explaining it away.

C. M. Sir, if you have nothing more to say, but only run round again to the old Story, this is giving up the *Point* instead of defending it: 'tis confuting your self instead of convincing me. But however to what you are pleased to offer, I have this further to reply: That even in the *Apostles* time many *Heresys* prevail'd, notwithstanding the *Church* was then under so many confessed *infallible Guides*. So that *Infallibility* is not so sure a *Guard* against, nor *Cure* of *Heresy*, as you imagine. The *Apostle* hath told us, that there must also be ^a *Heresys*, in the same Sense, I presume, that our *Lord* had declar'd. It ^b must needs be that *Offences* come. But what did *Infallibility* do there? and how was it apply'd? Why, not in any *peremptory Decrees* to exact a *blind Obedience*, but he proceeds in the ordinary way; he argues against the *Heresys*, and applies to the Reason and Conviction of his *Converts*: the *Church* must still use the same Method, that is, *She* must declare the *true Faith*, and defend it by all Arguments proper to the Questions mov'd against it: *Infallibility* never commanded a *blind Obedience* then, much less can any *Pretences* to it do so now.

^a 1 Cor. XI. 19. ^b Matt. XVIII. 7.

Pr. What Arguments think you will prevail, where *Infallibility* it self is not admitted?

C. M. Your Question is impertinent; what I say is *Fact*, the *Apostles* apply'd themselves as much to the *Reason* of their *Converts* as we must, who are not *Infallible*. We rest upon the *Word* of *God* as an *infallible Rule*, you rest upon you know *not what*.

Pr. And so you would have Recourse to the *Scriptures* as your last *Resort*, and are forced to set them up for your *Rule of Faith*, when, as I told you before, you neither know *what* is *Scripture*, nor the *Interpretation* of *Scripture*.

C. M. I have already answer'd you in part, that we are as well assur'd of the *Scriptures* as you are, and better too. And as for the understanding and applying this *Rule*, we are able to do it, and have applied it with more *Truth* and *Certainty* than your selves.

Pr. How can that be, when upon your own *Principles*, you can be certain of *Nothing*?

C. M. Yes, Sir, I have been taught, that we may be *certain* without being *Infallible*. But to say we can be certain of *Nothing*, is one of your foolish *Slanders* upon us and our *Principles*; and you are frequently throwing it about to shake and discompose *weak* and *unstable* Minds; and to beget a *Doubt* and *Distrustfulness* in poor simple *People* of the *Grounds* and *Assurance* of their *Faith*, so the more easily to draw them to depend upon your *Confidence* and *pretended Infallibility*. I have answer'd already to this vain Objection, and do only add, that we have the same *Principles* of *Certainty* with your selves. What think

54 *Truly apply'd by the Ch. of Engl.*

think you of all *Historical Certainty*? of all *Certainty*, that arises from *Testimony* and *Evidence*, and that *Certainty*, which is deriv'd from just *Reasoning* and *Deductions*? Upon all these *Principles*, we are as *certain* of the *Scriptures* themselves, and their *Interpretation*, as you can be with all your *Infallibility*: but this is your *grand fundamental Error*, *Your denying the Scripture to be the Rule of Faith*, and your *setting up your Infallibility against it*.

Pr. That's false, we bring our *Infallibility* to determine and confirm it.

C. M. Yes indeed by your *Infallibility* you make your *Church Judge* of the *Scriptures*, and the *Interpretation* of *Scripture*. For the *first*, how you have dealt with the *Sacred Canon*, we have seen already. Nor are you more *infallible* in *interpreting Scripture*, than in *settling*, and *defining what is Scripture*.

Pr. You are not to question the *Church's Power* to improve the *Canon*, it is enough, that she hath declar'd any Books *Canonical*, and *whatever she does, is to be allow'd, because she doth it*.

C. M. This is a brave bold round *Declaration* becoming an *infallible Church*; at this rate indeed the *Scripture* can be no *Rule*, if you have *Power* to alter the *Canon* at *Pleasure*: and it can be no *Rule*, tho' it self remains unaltered, as long as your *Church* pretends to be the *infallible Interpreter* of *Scripture*, and to obtrude such *Points* for *Articles of Faith*, as have no *Foundation* in *Scripture*, and are manifest *Contradictions* to it.

Pr. As the *Church* interprets the *Scripture*, or suppleys its *Defects* by *Tradition*, or subsequent

Of Tradition.

55

quent Definitions, those Doctrines have a sufficient Foundation in Scripture. It matters not, whether that Foundation be laid precisely in so many Words; you need not object it, we do professedly hold, that whatever is the Doctrine of the Church, is presumed to be the Doctrine of the Scripture; and when the Church seems to add any *Doctrine*, the *Scriptures* can't be suppos'd to contradict it, but to be agreeable to such *Doctrine*, or such *Doctrine* is to be suppos'd agreeable to the *Scriptures*, which you will. This I told you before.

C. M. And this I have answer'd before; but as you put it now, it is too refin'd, and too subtil for so plain a Man as me: I think the *Scriptures* exceeding clear in all *necessary Points*: but if your *Doctrines* and *Traditions* do either teach what is not taught, or the direct contrary to what is taught in *Scripture*, all your high Pretensions shall never make me believe, that what is *contradictory* to any thing can ever be supposed to be *agreeable* to it.

Pr. Then you set aside *Traditions*, without which your own Writers will tell you, the *Scriptures* cannot be understood.

C. M. What do you tell me of *Traditions* for? we set aside none but those of your own *Invention*, such as have prevail'd in, and are deriv'd from the corrupt *Ages* of the *Church*.

Pr. We own no *Such*: All ours are of equal *Authority*.

C. M. With you they may, with whom *Truth* and *Error* is all one: and when you say, you own no *Such*, and yet make *all* of equal *Authority*,

56 *How receiv'd by the Ch. of Engl.*

rity, you contradict your self, and put a *Stamp* upon the very worst *Corruptions*, that are supported by the very worst *Traditions*. 'Tis your Abuse of *Tradition* we quarel at: not at *Traditions* truly stated and understood.

Pr. You can make use of *Tradition*, when it serves your turn, without regarding what it is: all, that we rely upon, have the *Sanction* and *Authority* of the *Church*.

C. M. So a thousand *Errors* besides have the *Authority* of your *Church*: you first advance some false *Doctrine*, and then father it upon the *Primitive Church* by a *pretended Tradition*.

Pr. I deny that; but when you can't support any of your *Doctrines* or *Practices* by *Scripture*, you presently fly to *Tradition*.

C. M. But not without regarding what *Traditions*, as you do most falsely allege. We take in the Assistance of all *ancient Traditions*, recorded and deliver'd as the *Usage* and *Practice* of the *Primitive Church*: These we use as *Authoritys* and *Precedents* to prove the *Sense* and *Practice* of the *first Ages*, but we do not apply them as necessary to make up any *Defects* in the *Scriptures*: if we draw any Assistance from them in interpreting *Scripture*, we make no other use of them, than learned Men do make of the *Customs* and *Antiquities* of any *Nation*, the better to explain any *ancient Author*.

Pr. There are several Points manifestly founded in *Tradition*, which can be prov'd no other way, and will you give up the Points, rather than submit to this manner of Proof?

C. M. I am told there are no *necessary* Points, that

Where it holds, and how far. 57

that want the *Testimony* of *Tradition*, but they have it. If you mean *Articles* of *Faith*, they are to be found in the *Scriptures*; and then the Writings of the *Primitive* Times, and especially the *Decisions* of *general Councils* ever own'd and receiv'd by the *Catholic Church*, give us the true *Sense*, in which the *Church* receiv'd and understood them: for Matters of *Fact* and *Practice*, these may be attested by *oral Tradition* in some Cases, but the *Facts* themselves must be known to be as *Ancient* as they are pretended to be. No *Novel Practice*, whose alleg'd *Authority* can be disprov'd, can be admitted upon any *oral Tradition*: what is not consonant to *Scripture*, and especially what contradicts it, can be supported by no *Traditions* whatsoever.

Pr. So you think, you have given a very fine Account of this Matter: yet after all tho' you reject *oral Tradition*, yet we hold it of *equal Authority*, nay of *greater*, than the *Scriptures* themselves, as being *perfective* of them, and more certainly convey'd.

C. M. You may hold what you please, but surely unless you were resolv'd to assert *Impossibility*, and to persuade the World, if you could, that any thing is the more *Credible* for being the more *Absurd*, you would never advance so monstrous a Position. *Oral Tradition* in the very Nature of it is *variable*, and when it is *contrary* to the *Written*, we must suppose it *Wrong*, but especially when it *contradicts* the *Scripture*, it is undoubtedly *false*.

Pr. You need not spend your Breath so fast against *oral Tradition*; your own *Writers* as well

58 *Mischief of decrying the Scripture.*

as ours deny the *Scriptures* to be a perfect *Rule of Faith and Manners*.

C. M. What I objected was your denying the *Scriptures* to be the *Rule of Faith*. I said nothing of *Manners*, that you have slipped in so slyly to divert the Point, and puzzle the Question, but take it your own way: In what Sense the *Scriptures* are the *Rule of both*, I have heard very clearly explain'd, and am ready to give you an Answer upon that Head.

Pr. This Assertion is one of the Fundamental *Errors* of the *Reformation*, as you call it. Your *Church of England* complains heavily of it, and imputes, if I am not mistaken, all the *Schisms*, that infest her, to this *Principle* more than any other.

C. M. The *Church of England* imputes some *Schisms* and some *Heresys* at least to your depreciating the *Scriptures*, and setting up your *Traditions* as *infallible* above them. Thus you shake the *Authority of God's Word*, and weaken its *Strength*, when brought against any of our *Christian Infidels*, and you have taught the *Quakers*, that *Sect* of your own *Spawning*, to deny the *Sufficiency* of the *Scriptures*, as you do, to call them a *dead Letter*, as you do, to set up their crude and non-sensical *Effusions* against them, as you do your *Interpretations* and *Traditions*, and to prefer their own *Infallibility* and *Inspiration* before them.

Pr. What is it to us what your *Quakers*, or any of your *Sectarys* do? They act only by a *Private Spirit*, but are possibly more consistent in their *Schemes*, than you of the *Church of England*.

C. M.

Scr. how a perfect Rule of Manners. 59

C. M. More consistent with you they may be, and you do ill to charge them with a *Private Spirit*: we can justly object it, but to you they may reply, that they do pretend to *Infallibility* as well as you, and with more Reason, because they pretend to *immediate Inspiration* at the same time.

Pr. It signifies nothing to divert the Question, and screen your selves behind the *Quakers*: Be they *right*, or be they *wrong*, your *Principle* is equally false and dangerous in making the *Scriptures* your *sole Rule* in all things.

C. M. You are mistaken, Sir, the *Church of England* doth not, whatever some of those *Sects*, that differ from her, may do, but the *Church of England* doth not make the *Scriptures* the *sole Rule* of our *Actions*: you put a *double Fallacy* upon us, you extend the *Scriptures* as a *perfect Rule* of *Manners* as well as of *Faith*, which is true only so far as the *Precepts* and *Prohibitions* both *positive* and *moral* reach; and then you slide in another, and charge us with making the *Scriptures* the *sole Rule* of our *Actions*, in that *Sense*, that we must have an exprefs *Warrant* from *Scripture* for every single *Action*.

Pr. It is evident that you do so, and from your best Writers it also appears how many of your *Communion* have been *perplexed*, and *misled* in this *Affair*.

C. M. From the Writings of our greatest Men the *Contrary* is evident: They have labour'd to deliver poor scrupulous Souls out of this dangerous Snare: we own the *Principle* is a *Mistake*, and it is *such a Mistake*, as such ignorant

60 *What a Perfect Rule is.*

Folk as I am are apt to run into, and from hearing it so roundly asserted by some *weak* or *designing* Men, whom we had better *not* have *heard*, I with others have been led to think, that it was not *lawful* to do any thing, but what is *prescribed* in the *Word of God*.

Pr. This now is a fair ingenuous Confession, and if you are true to your *Principles*, you must have *Scripture* for every thing, you do: your *Priests* can never get over this Difficulty. If the *Scriptures* be a perfect *Rule*, you must admit no other, but your most reasonable and learned Men do evidently see an absolute Necessity of adding to, and supplying this *Rule*, and by Consequence they own, that the *Scriptures* are not a perfect *Rule*.

C. M. This I deny: and first I answer, that a perfect *Rule* do's not exclude all *other Rules*, for a *Rule* is said to be *perfect*, and it is sufficient to its *Perfection*, if it answers all the Purposes intended by it: in the next place I challenge you to point out, and say, in what *Instances* do they *add to*, or in what *Instances* do any of our learned Men *supply* any suppos'd *Defect* in this *Rule*.

Pr. Alas, *honest Man*! I am sorry to see such honest wel-meaning Souls thus miserably deluded by those, that pretend to be your *Guides*. Is not every *Act of Parliament*, every *human Ordinance*, that hath the Force of a *Law* an *additional Rule of Action*? are not your *Rubrics* and *Canons* so many *Rules*? why the very word *Canon*, if you understood so much, is but another word for a *Rule*; and besides these *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil Laws*, are not the *Circumstances* of our *Actions*,

Script. a most comprehensive Rule. 61

Actions, which no *Rules* can define, an endless and unlimited Ground for new *Rules* still?

C. M. If this be all, Sir, I have been taught by the *Person*, under whose *Guidance* I am, that the *Word* of *God* is nevertheless our *Rule* in all these *Cases*: for *Obedience* to *Temporal* or *Civil Laws* we are commanded, ^a *Every Soul to be subject to the higher Powers*: for the *Rules* or *Laws* of the *Church* we are taught to obey them, that have the ^b *Rule* over us in all *Injunctions*, concerning such things as relate to ^c *Decency and Order*: for the *Circumstances* of indifferent *Actions*, they are to be regulated by *Great* and *Royal Law* of ^d *Charity*: where our *Duty* to *God* interferes with our *Duty* to *Man*, we must obey ^e *God* rather than *Man*, and we must suffer patiently for our *Disobedience* to *Man*, even for ^f *wel-doing* we must suffer, if the *Will* of *God* be so: In the last place, *Whatever* we can discover to be the *Will* of *God* with respect to our *Behaviour*, do's at the same time become the *Rule* of our *Actions*. Thus, *reductively* at least, the *Scriptures* are a full and complete *Rule* of all our *Actions*, and have directed us even in the most *contingent* *Circumstances*.

Pr. How cunning are your *Guides* to deceive both you and themselves! was there not a *Rule* before there were any *Scriptures*? and is there not a *Rule* to those, who know not the *Scriptures*? Is not the *Law* of *Nature* a *Rule* common to all *Mankind*, and doth it not oblige *beside* and *independent* of the *Scripture*? How can the

^a Rom. XIII. 1. ^b Hebr. XIII. 17. ^c 1 Cor. XIV. 40 ^d Rom. XIV. 15, 19, 20. XV. 1, 2. 1 Cor. X. 28, 29, 32, 33. XVI. 14. ^e Acts IV. 19. ^f 1 Ep. Pet. II. 20. III. 17.

Scripture then be a *perfect* or the *sole Rule* of our *Actions*?

C. M. All this we acknowledge, there is a ^a *Law written in the Hearts of Men*, but this *Law* obliges *Christians* in another Manner, than it doth *Infidels*: This very *Law* is transcrib'd into the *Book of God*, it is there published and required, and *Christians* are under a *Divine* as well as *Natural Obligation* to it: so that with respect to us the *Law of Nature* is not to be reckon'd as *distinct* from, but as *included* in the *Scripture*: for we are set in Contradistinction to the rest of *Mankind*, and shall be *judged by the* ^b *Law and the Gospel*, which we have received.

Pr. Still the *Law of Nature* is *one* thing, and the *Scriptures* are *another*, and must not therefore be accounted the *same*.

C. M. The *Law of Nature* is now contain'd in the *Scripture*; the *Scripture* and *that* are distinct indeed as to *Infidels*, but unto us they are to be consider'd as *one Law*. I have heard this Matter illustrated in a very lively Manner. You know, 'tis said, that in Man there are *three Souls*: the *Vegetative*, which is common also to *Plants*, the *Sensitive*, which is common also to all other *Creatures*, and the *Rational Soul*, which is peculiar to Man; now however these are distinct, and may be so consider'd in their several *Respects*, yet when they Meet in Man, the other two are, as it were, taken into and contain'd under the *Rational Soul*: Just so the *Law of Nature*, or any other *Law* common to *Mankind*, when receiv'd into the *Scriptures*, is look'd

^a Rom. II. 15. ^b v. 12.

Of applying the Script. as a Rule. 63

upon as *Divine*, once more deliver'd by that *God*, from whom it was originally deriv'd; and tho' it subsists entirely distinct with respect to those, who know not the *Gospel*, as the *Sensitive Soul* subsists distinct in other *Animals*, yet in a *Christian* it is not so much consider'd as a distinct *Law*, as it is receiv'd for *Part* of the *Law* given us by the *Gospel*. But were it really distinct, yet, since the *Scriptures* comprehend it, they are for that reason a *more*, and not a *less* perfect *Rule*.

Pr. Well, but after all this fine plausible Discourse, which thou remembereſt ſo well, what art thou the better? how are your People able to apply this *Rule*? who is to be your *Teacher* and *Director*? for what ſignifys a *Rule*, if you do not know how to uſe it?

C. M. Every Man muſt be inſtructed as well as he can, and he muſt act according to his Knowledge, and the confeſſed Obligations of his *Duty*, both with reſpect to *Faith* and *Practice*. I would only have you obſerve, that I take *Faith*, as we are requir'd to *believe*, to be a *practical Part* of *Religion*.

Pr. Take it for what you will, do but believe, as I propoſe, and I deſire no more; now, *Friend*, you begin to draw to a Point, and I ſhall be able to manage you at laſt. Pray tell me, is every one *not oblig'd* to act further than the Knowledge of his *Duty leads him*?

C. M. If any Perſon is *ignorant* thro' any *Fault* of his own, whether it be *Pride*, *Prejudice*, *Negligence* or *Lazineſs*, or any *other*, he ſhall be anſwerable for his *Ignorance*, and for all the *Faults* he

64 *Of Private Judgment.*

he shall commit out of that *Ignorance*: but directly to your question I answer, that our *Actions* must be *Rational*; no one can believe or act further than he apprehends what is proposed to him as Matter of *Faith*, or Matter of *Duty*.

Pr. At this Rate you make every Man his own *Judge*, and set up private *Judgment* against the Obligation of any *Authority*, which might otherwise *compel him to believe*.

C. M. To *compel* a Man to *believe*, is a sort of *Non-sense* befitting your Methods of *Conversion*: *Believing* must be a Man's own *Act*, and his *Assent* must be the *Result* of his private *Judgment*, when you have said and done all you can; but this *Judgment* may be directed by the *Public Voice* and *Authority* of the *Church*, as properly as by the *Instruction* and *Information* of any *Private Man*.

Pr. A Man then, it seems, may give his *Judgment* up to the *Church*; say but he is *obliged* to do so, and you and I shall be Friends.

C. M. Have a Care there, Sir, *Ware Sheep*. You must not think to *catch old Birds with Chaff*. That Men are obliged to assent to the *Doctrines* of the *Gospel*, when duely and sufficiently propos'd, we do readily acknowledge: that they are obliged to a *Blind implicit Obedience* and *Assent*, that we do as plainly deny.

Pr. So then *private Judgment* gives every one a Liberty of *Judging* for himself: *Every* one may chuse his own *Creed*, and *no* one is answerable for what he *believes*. This, in spite of all your Arts to disguise it, is the pernicious Consequence of all *private Judgment*.

C. M.

C. M. It is your *Perverseness*, that will not distinguish between a *rational* and a *blind irrational Assent*, that is, between *Assent* and *no Assent*: every Man's *Assent* is an *Act* of his own, and proceeds from his own *Reason*, and must of necessity be an *Act* of his *private Judgment*; but that therefore he may judge as he pleases without being obliged to any *determinate Judgment*, is a Conclusion of *yours* and not of *ours*.

Pr. 'Tis a Conclusion that necessarily follows; if a Man is not to be *controlled*, he may certainly *act* as he *pleases*.

C. M. That is, if you mean any thing, if a Man may not be compell'd by outward Force in this *World*, he can't be accountable for his *private Judgment* in the other.

Pr. No. You hold, that every Man may be *sav'd*, let him believe as he pleases, because no Man can believe more than he can.

C. M. This is a most notorious Slander upon the *Church of England*, directly contrary to the *XVIII Article*, as I have heard it explain'd.

Pr. What! don't I know what your greatest *Writers* have said? don't I know how *Sincerity* will upon your *Principles* make a Man acceptable to *God* in any *Faith*, or no *Faith* at all?

C. M. That is a Controversy I was never concern'd in, so as to hear it discuss'd by any of our learned Neighbours, but I have heard, that the *Church of England* did in the *most solemn manner disclaim all such Principles*; that her greatest *Divines*, and most faithful *Sons* opposed the *Author* of them, and that the *Clergy* in *Convocation* remonstrated against them: and shall the *Opinions*

66 *Church of Engl. vindicated.*

nions of any *single Person*, or *Party* be objected to the *Church of England*, as her *Doctrine*?

Pr. All, you can say, signifies nothing, your whole *Reformation* stands upon this *Principle* of *private Judgment*, and *private Judgment* is a *Jest*, if it doth not *justify* every Man to himself.

C. M. Do you mean in *every thing*? if you do, the desperate *Consequences* of such a *Doctrine*, must needs confute it: if you mean in *Matters of Faith*, I answer, that *God* hath reveal'd his *Will* and requir'd *Faith* to no purpose, if every Man's *private Judgment* shall *justify* him to himself. *Private Judgment* in Relation to things reveal'd by *God*, will then only pass, when it is *right*.

Pr. I meddle not with what *God* requires: What I mean, is this, that under a *Pretence* of obliging Men to conform their *private Judgment* to the *Public*, your *Church* doth the same thing, which you object to us, that is, she makes Men *believe* as she pleases.

C. M. I am told that the *Church of England* professes *one* fixed and unalterable *Doctrine* embrac'd upon the strictest and most religious *Examination*, and found to be perfectly agreeable to the *Doctrine* of the *Apostles*, and the *pure primitive Faith*: these her *Doctrines* she lays fairly open to the *Examination* of all Men: she hath no *Reserves*, and she fears not the severest *Scrutiny*: her *Ministers* withhold no part of *Divine Knowledge* from the *People*, and I am sure, if I may pronounce of others, by those whom I know, they do wish that the meanest Member of the *Church of England* were as knowing as themselves.

Pr.

Pr. Judg. to conform to the Ch. 67

Pr. Oh! you are a mighty knowing *People!*

C. M. Sir, it is the Desire and Endeavour of our *Clergy* to make us more knowing. There is abundance of *Ignorance* in all parts of the *Nation*; but not for want of *Instruction*. Every good Man wishes, that every Member of the *Church* embrac'd her *Communion* upon a full *Conviction*, and was able to give a ^a *Reason of the Hope that is in him, with Meekness and Fear.*

Pr. So, now you are upon the *Cant*, and what is all this but *Grimace* and *Hypocrisy*, when for all your smooth talking you will not suffer them to differ in *Judgment* from you?

C. M. As I said before, Every Man must *judge* for himself, but every Man's *Judgment* must agree with the *Church of England*, if he desires to be or to continue a Member of that *Church*.

Pr. When once he is a Member then, you hold him to it, you will not suffer a Man to *differ* from you any more than *we* will.

C. M. We can't help any Man's *differing*, he must follow his own *Judgment*: there are a great many Points, which are disputed among learned Men, and the *Church* is not scandalized at them, provided they do not break *Communion*, nor overturn the *Foundation*.

Pr. Still, I say, you are the most inconsistent absurd People in the World, to pretend you allow of *private Judgment*, and at the same time to exact a *Submission* of every Man's *Judgment* in *Fundamentals* at least to the *Church*.

C. M. I can see no Absurdity in this, I desire you only to suppose, Sir, that this is one Point

^a 1 Ep. Pet. II. 15.

68 *Tho' a Man must judge for himself,*

offer'd to every Man's *private Judgment*, as it certainly is, and must be understood to be so in the very Nature of the thing, viz. whether he that desires to be a Member of any *Church*, must not conform his *Judgment* to the *Judgment* of that *Church*? If this be yielded, the rest follows of Course.

Pr. What follows of Course? In our *Church*, there is some Sense in talking at this rate, but in yours it is all *Contradiction* and *Non-sense*. *If a Man hath a right to judge for himself, then no Body can judge for him:* and he is not upon any Account to be *concluded* by another's *Judgment*.

C. M. I am told, Sir, that this boasted *Consequence*, with which your Friends the *Deists* make such a Flourish, will not *hold*: if you mean, that *one private Man* cannot judge for *another*, so as to oblige that *other* to think and believe as he doth, you say true; but if you mean, that *Persons* vested with *Public Authority* cannot judge for *others*, this is false: In *Civil Causes* the *Law* is a *Public Judgment*: they, that make the *Law*, do judge for *others*, and conclude them by their *Judgment*; but still every *Law*, when promulged, I think the term is, is open to *every Man's Judgment*, tho' to *no Man's Controll*: whatever *Sense* a Man takes it in, that is his *private Judgment* of it, but he must take care how he mistakes it.

Pr. What is Matter of *Law* to Matter of *Faith*? *No Body* can judge for *another*, where every *Body* is to believe for *himself*.

C. M. If every Man might believe, as he pleas'd, because every Man must believe for himself,

How others may judge for him. 69

himself, there would be some Sense in what you say; but if *God* in his holy *Word* has requir'd a *determinate Belief* of *such and such Truths*, which he hath reveal'd, then I conceive, tho' Men do judge for themselves, yet others may nevertheless judge for them.

Pr. Pray how do's that appear? if they may judge for themselves, why must others judge for them too?

C. M. Others judge for them in proposing to their *Judgment* Points already determined and fixed by *Divine Revelation*; and this must necessarily be so, for where *God* hath requir'd *Belief*, that *Belief* must be *uniform* in all the Members of his *Church*. That is, the *Faith* must be *One*; but this is impossible, unless there be *one determined Rule* and *Judgment* settled, to which every Member of *Christ's Church* shall be obliged to conform.

Pr. If every Man is at *Liberty* to judge for himself, I say, that no *Public Judgment* of *Church, Synod* or *Council* can affect him in the least.

C. M. Sir, if any Man pretends to be a Member of any *Church*, he must be concluded by the *Judgment* of that *Church*: if his *private Judgment* disagrees in any Point with the *Public*, let him consider, whether he can still with a good Conscience *continue* a Member of that *Church*; if not, let him follow his *private Judgment*, but at the same time let him *depart* from that *Society*, with which he cannot according to his *private Judgment* agree.

Pr. If you allow of *private Judgment*, the *Church* is not concern'd, let her Members think
what

what they will: let them continue, or let them depart, it is all one to her.

C. M. No surely: this Notion may be left to the *Judgment* of all reasonable Men. 'Tis a Contradiction to suppose a *Church* professing the *Faith* of *Christ*, and permitting all her Members to believe as they please.

Pr. Then how do you allow of *private Judgment*, if you oblige People to any *Sett*, or any determinate Sense of any *Sett* of *Articles*?

C. M. Very well: every Man, when these *Articles* are propos'd to him, if he takes them at all into Consideration, uses his *private Judgment* about them, and either *Assents* or *Dissents*, as he is *persuaded* in his *own Mind*. We don't pretend to force his *Assent*, that's an Undertaking we leave to you; but if he *dissents*, 'tis to be presum'd, he will not offer to be a Member of the *Church*.

Pr. But tho' you don't *force* a Man, yet you pretend he is under an *Obligation*.

C. M. Yes, if a Man will be a Member of any *Society*, he must not only submit to, but he is suppos'd to approve of the *Laws* of that *Society*. Look you, Sir, I am told, the whole Process of this *Affair* stands thus: It hath pleased *Almighty God* to admit *fallen Man* to *Grace* upon such *Terms* and *Conditions*, as he hath requir'd in his *holy Word*: He hath appointed an *Order* of *Men*, and vested them with sufficient *Powers* to propose these *Terms* to the World: Here is *Life* and *Death* set before those, to whom these *Terms* are proposed: every *Body* is left to judge of them, to accept or refuse them, but no Man that

Consistent with Private Judgm. 71

that refuses them, can be entitled to the *Benefits*, which are annexed to the *Acceptance* and *Observance* of them: he is on the other hand obnoxious to the *Pains* threatned to those, that refuse them: the *Church of England* do's not require their *Assent* any further, than *God's Word* requires it: let them judge for themselves, but then they must abide the *Consequence* of their *Judgment*.

Pr. All this I don't understand, either give up *private Judgment*, or say, that if Men are under an *Obligation* to believe, they are not at *Liberty* to judge for themselves.

C. M. I have shew'd, that these are very *Consistent*, and there is no necessity of parting with *private Judgment*: we are the truest *Friends* to it, who regulate it within due *Bounds*: the unlimited *Use* of it, such as shall justify a Man let him believe what he will, is what will forfeit it, and enslave it at last; and from *private Judgment* Men will rather, than be perpetually *unsettled*, run into *implicit Faith*; and that is the Mark your *Church* is aiming at, in encouraging and suborning every *Sect* of *Infidels* or *Believers* against the *Church of England*.

Pr. If you are a *true Church*, you will *stand*: you are briskly attacked, but as long as you allow of *private Judgment*, you will stand your *Ground*, I warrant ye!

C. M. Sir, whatever Inconveniences we suffer, it is the *Sense* of the *Church*, so far as I am inform'd, to hold to her *Principles*: the *Church of England* doth indeed allow of *private Judgment*: she considers it as every Man's *Right* to judge

72 *The Sentiments of the Ch. of Engl.*

judge for himself previously to any *Determination*: if any Person becomes your *Convert*, he judges *once* for himself at least, and he judges you think so *rightly* then, that you will never let him judge for himself *again*. This is that *Tyranny* over Men's *Minds*, which we so justly complain of, the exacting this *implicit Faith*, this *blind Obedience*.

Pr. But you suffer Men to judge for themselves, 'till they have run the whole *Circle* of *Religion* thro' all the *Sects*, and if they run out of *Religion* into *Paganism* it is all one to you.

C. M. I was going to give you the *Sentiments* of the *Church* of *England* upon this *Head*, as I have heard them upon several *Occasions*; but you are leading me another way. Be it as you will, I am ready to follow.

Pr. The *Sentiments* of your *Church* can be of no great *Moment*, as long as she allows this *Practice*: *She* may think what she will her self, it signifies nothing as long as she permits her *People* to think and do as they please.

C. M. The *Church* of *England* gives her *People* no more *Liberty*, than *God* allows them: Man is a *free Agent* by the grand *Charter* of his *Creation*; and tho' he corrupted his *Mind*, and debased his *Facultys*, and so far forfeited this *Charter* by his *Fall*, that he could not act with *Truth* and *Purity*, as before, yet still he acted *freely*: and after *God* had purposed to receive him to *Grace*, because his *Mind* was darken'd, and his *Intellectual Facultys* were impair'd, because Mankind had almost universally lost the true *Notion* of *God*, and were all sunk into *Idolatry*,
He

Man considered as lost. 73

He gather'd to himself a *Church* and *People*, to whom from time to time he reveal'd *Himself*, 'till he compleated the *Revelation* by *Jesus Christ*.

Pr. Why what are you driving at? whether are you going? what is all this to the Business of *private Judgment*?

C. M. I take it, Sir, to be very Material and of great Importance in this Argument to shew how Mankind are obliged to conform themselves to the *Will of God*, whenever by his Appointment it is signified to them. You are under a Mistake, if you argue with me upon the *Principles* of the *Deists*, that Man is at Liberty to think as he pleases without regard to any *Revelation* or *Dispensation*, which *God* hath given to the World. You must look upon Man as in a *forfeited* and *lost* Condition, and therefore he can be sav'd only upon those *Terms*, which *God* proposes to him, and requires of him.

Pr. Well, this is a Consideration for *Christians*: others are upon the old Foot of the *Law of Nature*: they are obliged to believe no further than the *Light of Nature* directs them.

C. M. Sir, I am told, that this will not serve the turn in a *Christian Country*, and if you trust to the meer *Light of Nature*, without the fuller Discoverys of *Revelation*, you will find, that by our *Natural Notions* we cannot discover the *true Nature* of the *Deity*.

Pr. Who taught you this Lesson? I do not dislike what you say, but how will you make it out?

C. M. Sir, I have been taught, that *God* did not leave Man originally to the meer *Light of*
K *Nature,*

Nature, but that he reveal'd himself to our *First Parents*; from whence it is manifest, that since the *Fall* at least we cannot by *Searching*^a *find out God*; nor by our natural Notions *can we find out the Almighty to Perfection*. This is plain from the *History of the World*, where the *true Notion* of the *Deity* was *universally lost*, even in the politest and most knowing *Nations*, and how could *Man discover*, when he could not *retain* a just Apprehension of *God*, which had once been reveal'd in the *Beginning* of the *World*?

Pr. Well what use do you make of all this? how do you point it to the present Purpose?

C. M. Very full. Since we cannot by our *Natural Powers* alone form true Conceptions of *God*, we must therefore rest in that *Revelation*, which *God* hath made of *Himself* in his *Holy Word*. This he requires of all Men, to whom that *Word* is made known, as they expect his *Favour*; but he proposes his *Will* to their Choice, whether they will receive it, and obey it, or not, declaring at the same time the Consequence of their *Refusal*. This is that *Freedom of Action*, which is left us by *God*, and this *Freedom* cannot be taken from us: it is this, which makes us *Moral Agents*, and as such accountable for our *Choice* as well as our *Actions*.

Pr. Now you are coming about to the old Point again; under all this specious Harrangue cannot you discover *Chains*, and *Compulsion* conceal'd? Are you equally at *Liberty* to *assent* or *dissent*? if not, you are not *free Agents*.

C. M. The *Freedom of Action* consists, as I

^a Job XI. 7.

Wherein Liberty of Action consists. 75

have been told, in a *Power of Determining* our selves on either side of the Question; if by *Liberty* you mean this *Power* and *Ability*, we are equally at *Liberty* to chuse or refuse: but if by *Liberty* you mean, that *God* hath left it indifferent, so that we are equally *acceptable* to him, whatever *Choice* we make either in *Affenting* or *Dissenting* to his *Will*, this cannot in common Sense be admitted.

Pr. Well what you say is very true, but then how is all this consistent with that *private Judgment*, you pretend to.

C. M. Sir, you see the *Church of England* holds Men under no *Restraints*, but those which *God* in his *Word* hath laid upon them: every Man must judge for himself, but then as I said before, he judges at his *Peril*. This is a Condition *requir'd* of *God*, and not *impos'd* by *Man*: Man's thinking himself *not* accountable won't make him *so*.

Pr. Upon our *Principles* you may press this Argument home, but any *Infidel* may distress you greatly upon *yours*; let me see you, or any of you apply it thoroughly to the Business of *Religion*. You will never be upon a right Bottom, till you give up this *Claim* of *private Judgment*.

C. M. I am taught, we can never be upon a right Bottom without it. I suppose, when you call upon me to apply this in Matters of *Religion*, you mean *reveal'd Religion*, or else, what you call so, a *Religion* of *your own* making.

Pr. I do mean *reveal'd Religion*: whatever the *Church* teaches, as an *Object* of *Faith*.

C. M. I have proved it already in general,

76 *Men Accountable for it, and why.*

but you wind and turn this Argument every way to catch me, and all in vain, for I answer more particularly with respect to such *Doctrines*, as *Christ* and his *Apostles* delivered, we are requir'd to believe them, and are accountable for our *Unbelief* or the *Judgment* we make of them, if it be *wrong*. I speak not of your *Additional Doctrines*: it is our Duty to *dissent* from them, if it be our Duty to *assent* to the other.

Pr. Why so?

C. M. Because they are contrary to the *Will* of *God* reveal'd by *Moses* and the *Prophets*, by *Christ* and his *Apostles*: this is easily proved, if we were to enter into Particulars; but it is my Business not so much to *offend* you, as to *defend* my self.

Pr. *Offend* me do'st say? Why thou art a most provoking Fellow, and I have had the Patience of *Job*; but go on, prove that you are accountable for *private Judgment*, and confound your self, and all your *Adherents*.

C. M. My proving it will confound no Body but you, together with *Deists*, *Quakers*, and *Socinians*, and all such as build upon their *Principles*; but we, while we indulge that *Liberty* of *Reason*, with which every Man is born, do at the same time curb and restrain the *License*. *Reason*, and *private Judgment*, which is the Exercise of *Reason*, are a *Blessing* given us of *God*, we may *use* them as we ought, or we may *abuse* them, and therefore they must be *rightly* applied or we are accountable for the *Misapplication*. This I may call a *natural* or *moral Argument*.

Pr. Thou art a long time in coming to the Point,

Obliged to receive the Gospel. 77

Point, this is only *beating about the Bush*; say, if thou canst upon your *Principles*, how a Man is Accountable.

C. M. Very easily. For supposing it possible for the *Word of God* to be truly *proposed*, and for the *People*, to whom it is *proposed*, to understand at the same time the *Sense*, in which it is delivered, in this case every Man is to judge at his Peril, and unless he receives the *Truth* as 'tis *proposed*, he shall be answerable for his *Refusal*.

Pr. This is only Saying: this is not Proving.

C. M. I prove it thus; the *Jews* were not, nor were the *Heathen* excusable for their *Infidelity* in refusing the *Gospel*, and rejecting the *Council of God against themselves*, yet in not Believing, they only followed their *private Judgment*.

Pr. The *Truth* proposed to them was attested by *Miracles*, and those, that proposed it, were *Infallible*; but you suppose neither *Miracles* nor *Infallibility* in those, that propose it *now*.

C. M. No Proposition, that is clear and true, is ever the clearer or the truer, because the Person, that proposes it, is *Infallible*, but if the same *Truths* be proposed *now*, that were proposed *then*, we are also concluded by the *original-Infallibility* of the first Proposers; as for *Miracles*, they were the *Seal of God* to his *Truth*, and the *Evidence* of them did no doubt aggravate the *Infidelity* of those, who saw them wrought, and refused to believe: but supposing as you do in the Objection, the *Miracles* to have been wrought, and the same *Truths* to be *now* proposed, then I say, the same *Truths* stand attested by the same *Miracles*, and every *Unbeliever*

78 *Not accountable, if not free Agents.*

liever is as inexcusable *now* as *they* were *then*.

Pr. Do People see such *Miracles* wrought now adays? if not, how is the Conviction the same?

C. M. Your *Church* pretends to work *Miracles*, and therefore may be obliged to *produce* them, before she can require our *Assent*; it is enough for us to propose the *Facts* as recorded and attested, and then if any Person affects not to believe, that these *Miracles* were wrought, he is equally *accountable* for his *Unbelief* with them, that saw them, supposing these *Miracles* as well attested, as any other *Facts*, which Mankind upon good *Authority* do believe.

Pr. Well: I am pretty much of your Mind in this; but there are other *Patrons* of *private Judgment* besides your *Church*, who place it upon another Foot, and they will tell you, that say what you will, *private Judgment* is no *private Judgment*, if it be accountable for its *Determination*.

C. M. They may as well pretend, as I have heard it argued, that Men are not accountable for their *Actions*, because they are *free Agents*, as that they are not accountable for *private Judgment*, because they have the *Liberty* of *Judging*: every *Freedom* do's not make a Man Unaccountable: so far from it, that he could not be accountable, if he was not *free*. The *Apostle* tells the *Romans*, *When^a ye were the Servants of Sin, ye were free from Righteousness*: but sure he did not mean from the *Obligation*.

Pr. But what *Power* has your *Church* to lay any

^a Rom. VI. 20.

The true Authority of the Church. 79

Obligation upon Men to believe? You have no *Authority*, no *Commission*.

C. M. Sir, I have been taught what the *Authority* of the *Catholic Church* is, and consequently what is the *Authority* of every *National Church*, as a Member of the *Catholic*, with regard to *private Judgment*: the *Church* as a *Spiritual Society*, declares what *Points* are necessary, and in what *Sense* to be believ'd: this is the *Authority*, which our *Articles* assert the *Church* to have in ^a *Controversys of Faith*; and if the *Decision* be right, every *private Judgment*, that dissents from her, shall be condemn'd, according to the Nature of its *Dissent*, whether it be *Infidelity*, *Herefy*, or *Schism*.

Pr. What is this to the *Church of England*? what *Authority* hath your *Church*? your *Articles* speak of the *Catholic Church*, and so they own that *Authority* of our *Church*, which you have so absurdly deny'd.

C. M. You are still upon the old Catch, but tho' we own the *Authority* of the *Church*, we deny yours to be the *Catholic Church*: and in asserting this *Authority* to the *Church*, our *Articles* intend to assert to every *National Church* the *Power* of requiring that *Faith*, which is, and hath been held by the *Catholic Church* from the beginning, and throughout all *Ages*.

Pr. But you can't pretend to be a *National Church*: once indeed you were, and a Member of the *Catholic Church*, but since your *Separation* from us, you have neither *Priests* nor *Altar*: no *Mission*: no *Orders*, and consequently no *Sacraments*.

C. M. Our *Separation* from you hath not altered the Case at all: we have the same *Orders*,

80 *Auth. and Orders of the Ch. of Engl.*
and the same *Mission*, as to all the *Essentials*,
which we ever had, and in as ample a Manner,
as *Christ* and his *Apostles* gave them, and that is
enough.

Pr. We know very well from whence your
Orders are derived, and how they were clande-
stinely and prophanely conferred in a *Tavern*.

C. M. I wonder to hear you trump up that
old exploded Piece of *Scandal*, which hath been
so often and so fully refuted, and very lately
by an excellent Person of your own *Communion*,
who hath most learnedly vindicated the *Vali-
dity* of our *Orders* upon true *Catholic Principles*,
and hath most clearly and fully answered *That*,
and all other *Objections*. And to that admirable
Dissertation I refer you.

Pr. But he is answered with a Witness, and
you have no *Ordination*: the *Nag's-head* Story
so well attested destroys your *Orders* for ever.
But if that *Story* were *false* as it is *true*, you had
at that time no *Bishops*; and supposing you had
Bishops, your *Ordinal* is defective, and those *Bi-
shops*, tho' they would, could not by that *Ordi-
nal* confer *Orders*.

C. M. Your *Objections* to our *Bishops*, and
Ordinal, are all answered by that excellent Per-
son, I mention'd, *Father Courayer* in his *Differ-
tation*; and his *Defence*, as I heard very lately,
clearly shows the Weakness of those great *Names*,
that pretend to answer him. For the *Tavern-
story* your way of answering is like that of your
inventing, and answerable to your *Practice* in
several other *Instances*, boldly to assert, and as
boldly to repeat the *Scandal*. Let me tell you,
Sir,

Sir, what I have heard with Reference to that Affair. The *Story* was not trumped up 'till after the Year 1600: none of your Writers object it before that time: their Exceptions are drawn from other *Heads* 'till then: and considering all the *Absurditys*, with which it is loaded, it is made a fit *Article* for a *Papist's Creed*: I mean a *fire-hot Papist*.

Pr. However I shall answer thy rude Language with Coolness; and I do own, that it was late before it came to *Light*, as *Murders* are often discover'd a long time after they were committed; but it was fully prov'd, when once it was brought upon the *Stage*.

C. M. I am told, that *Mr Mason* and *Archbishop Bramhall* have long since confuted all your inconsistent impudent idle *Tales* of this Matter, and when this senseless *Story* was *reviv'd* some Years since, as confidently as if it had never been *disprov'd*, *Mr D. Williams* collected enough to satisfy any impartial Reader: the same *Gentleman* hath since translated *Father Courayer's Dissertation*, and is now, as I have heard, about to give us his *Defences*.

Pr. This *Story* we will never give up; say what you will, we will believe *our own* People before *yours*.

C. M. You continue it, I dare say, against your *Knowledge* and *Conscience*: it serves, you think, to astonish and confound poor ignorant *People*; and with you every thing is *Lawful*, that will promote your *Cause*.

Pr. Thou art a Slanderer: we have no need of this *Story*: only it was the *shortest Way* of destroying

stroying all your Pretensions to *Orders*, and I suppose, it was *so long* before it was *published*, because *our Friends* would be *sure*, it was *true* before they *published* it.

C. M. Yes to be sure! You are very tender, and scrupulous *how* you vent a *Ly*: the truth is your *Friends* were resolved to *calumniate* stoutly, and hoped that *every Body* was *dead*, that could confute them; But *REGISTERS* are a Sort of *immortal* Things, and besides there was one Noble *Lord* alive so late as 1616, the old *Earl* of *Nottingham*, who *attested*, when he was ask'd, if he remember'd any thing of that great *Transaction*, that 'He was present at *Arch-bishop Parker's Consecration* at *Lambeth*, invited thither by the *Arch-bishop* himself, they being nearly related to each other.

Pr. But supposing *Parker* and the *Rest* ordain'd by *Bishops*, who had been *truly* ordain'd themselves, still your *Separation* vacates their *Orders*, and annuls their *Powers*: We can never acknowledge the *Validity* of *Orders* in your *Church*.

C. M. As you please for that, but pray be careful, while you would void our *Orders*, you do not destroy *your own*. What say you to the *Schisms*, which in the times of your *Antipopes* prevail'd in your *Church*?

Pr. But set aside your *Separation*, you derive your *Religion*, your *Orders*, and your *Faith* from *Acts* of *Parliament*, and, as I have lately read, you hold the *Doctrine* of the *Trinity*, as it is established by *Law*.

C. M. This vain Pretence was begun by you *Papists*, pursu'd by the *Presbyterians*, as they still
lick

Mon. Renaudot's Memorial. 83

lick up most of your Spittle, and taken up of late by *Deists* and *Infidels*; but I have been taught, that our *Orders* are not *valid*, nor our *Doctrine* true, because *they* are *established* by *Law*, but *they* are therefore *established* by *Law*, because *they* are *valid* and *true* independently of the *Law*.

Pr. Well: if your *Orders* are *valid*, you are in a much better *Condition*, than I imagin'd, tho' still in a *damnable*, because in a *schismatical State*; In this Case you condemn your *selves*, as long as *we* object the same to you, which you do to *those*, which you call *Dissenters* from the *Church of England*.

C. M. But the *Parallel*, I am instructed, will not hold, either with respect to *Orders* or *Separation*, notwithstanding the *French^a Abbot's Memorial*, *Renaudot*, I think, they call him: This was not *produc'd* with so good a Grace, I heard a *Gentleman* say, when the *Objection* was just then so fully answer'd by *Father Courayer*, but it show'd the Readiness of our *Dissenters* still to pick up any *Assistance* from the *Papists* against the *Church of England*.

Pr. But the *Memorial* is true; don't you deal by the *Dissenters* just as *we* deal by you? You admit our *Orders*, and will not admit *theirs*: We admit neither *yours* nor *theirs*.

C. M. But perhaps in a little time you may have a better Opinion of our *Orders*, and then this fine Similitude is spoil'd: however we do admit *yours*, because you have under all that *Load* of *Ceremonys* nevertheless retain'd the *Essentials*, and from them *we* do derive our *own*,

^a Cal. Sermon. Ministry of the Dissenters vind. 2d Ed. p. 30, 31.

84 *Ch. of Engl. and Dissenters.*

which descended to us from the first Planting of *Christianity*, and tho', after we mixed with your *Body* the *Channel* ran foul for a long *Course* of *Years*, yet it was still the same *Stream* continued, which at last *purged* its self from its *Pollutions*, and now *flows pure*, as it did from the *Apostles* times: we may easily see, as in some *Rivers*, where the *Waters* stain'd and mudded by the Descent of Floods, *begin* to run *clear* again.

Pr. Your *Orders*, I perceive, depend upon the *Truth* of some *Facts*, which I have not time to examine further at present, but how do you *charge* the *Dissenters*, and *clear* your *selves* of the *Guilt* of *Schism*?

C. M. Sir, I must not run into that *Controversy* now, I have been taught to talk with *them* as well as with *you*, but I shall only say at present, that the *Case* is *widely different* between the *Church* of *Rome*, and the *Church* of *England*, and between the *Church* of *England*, and the *Dissenters*: I will instance only in one Particular. The *Dissenters* to justify their *Separation* from *us* object *Idolatry* to the *Church* of *England*, but if the *Idolatry* objected to *us* be not *Idolatry*, and if the *Idolatry* we object to *you* be *Idolatry*, then *they vindicate* our *Separation* from *you*, and at the same time *condemn themselves* in *separating* from *us*.

Pr. Quarrel as you will among your selves: You are *all Schismatics* with respect to *us*, we never made any *Distinction* between the *Dissenters* and *you*.

C. M. This, Sir, is but repeating the same thing over and over; But before we part, to
shew

Father Cressy's Opinion of Ch. of Eng. 85

shew you, that *some* of your *Church* at least do make a *Difference* between the *Church* of *England*, and those *Sectarys* that differ from *her*, let me present you with the *Judgment* of a great *Champion* in the *Roman* Cause, which my *Instructor* laid one day before us, and I thought it of that Importance, that I got it by heart. It is in the 43^d page of *Father* ^a *Cressy's* Book against *Edward Bagshaw*, and there you will see *Mr. Cressy* had other thoughts of the *Church* of *England*, and her *Orders* than you have, and more suitable to *Father Courayer's* sentiments than *yours*.

Pr. Well: let's hear it.

C. M. It is thus. 'As for *Sects*, that have no 'Succession of Ordination, for such to assume 'Authority and Jurisdiction in matters of Religion is ridiculous even to common Sense: 'for it implies, that to be Men, which have an 'ordinary use of reason, is a sufficient Qualification to become Ecclesiastical Teachers, and 'Governours.

Pr. And what he saith is true, and concludes against *you* as well as any other *Sects*.

C. M. But you are mistaken, Sir, for he goes on in this Manner. 'The *Clergy* of *England* challenging a lawful Ordination have some pretensions to a real Authority: and if they could 'justify themselves free from the guilt of Schism, 'even we *Roman Catholics* could not deny, but 'their Authority would oblige in Conscience, 'and under the penalty of Damnation, because 'then it would be an Authority participating 'that of the whole *Catholic Church*, and acting

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'in union with it.' So that all, that lies upon us, is to vindicate the *Church of England* from the *Charge of Schism*, and that is a *Task*, which I will *undertake*, whenever you please.

Pr. I can't stay now; but I must needs say, Thou art a *notable Talker*, and a *bold Undertaker*. I shall have more to say to you another time.

C. M. You see, Sir, that *Mr Cressy* doth as good as allow our *Orders*, provided we are *clear of Schism*: He objects nothing of the *Nag's-head*: and as we are *reform'd* upon the *Model* of the *Primitive Church*, both in *Doctrine* and *Government*, and as we do *participate* of the *Authority*, I do most firmly *conclude*, that we are a *true*, a *pure* and a *sound Part* of the *Catholic Church*.

: And so, Sir, *Your humble Servant*. Farewel.

F I N I S.